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* The Chillblast Fusion Quasar was voted desktop PC of the year by PC Pro

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Crafty cheats for tasty treats

o much stuff is given away free on the web every day that, after a while, you can lose enthusiasm. Do I actually need another pack of tomato seeds when I haven't even planted the last lot? Will a free Pantene sample really leave my hair looking healthy with full body and shine, when it's rapidly receding? Still, there are lots of great freebies available if you know where to look and how to get them, from free credit to spend on Google Play and Amazon to free meals at local restaurants. In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we reveal our favourite sneaky tricks for saving money

online and off, and snaffling bargains from under the noses of big websites.

Because this is our Easter issue, not only have we got a feature about Google's latest Easter Eggs on page 49, but we've also hidden five special Web User eggs throughout the issue. Which The first reader to find them all and send me an email describing where they are will win a Web User mug. Happy hunting!



robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk #webuser





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Replay British gaming history

his wonderful timeline charting the evolution of the British gaming industry begins in February 1975 when Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone founded Games Workshop. It then celebrates landmark games over the following 40 years, including 1978's MUD (Multi-User

Dungeon), the first role-playing adventure game; Eighties classics Manic Miner and Elite (see screen grabs); and modern hits such as Grand Theft Auto, Tomb Raider and Moshi

Monsters. You can watch videos of the games, play some in your browser and read about the impact they had.

It's presented by Ian Livingstone himself, who with Jackson enriched many an Eighties childhood by writing the Fighting Fantasy books. You'll find it on the BBC's superb iWonder website (click the link right). launched last year, which is like



Wikipedia meets QI, and is a mustbookmark site for anyone with a curious mind.

The timeline is also part of the BBC's Make It Digital campaign (www.bbc .co.uk/makeitdigital) to encourage children "to get creative with coding, programming and digital technology",

which involves giving coding devices to every child in year 7 across the UK. bit.lv/

games367



Watch Netflix's selfimposed hacks

bit.ly/flix367

Lots of tech companies now run 'hack days' for software developers to explore innovative ways their services could work. You can see some of the best results from Netflix's latest hack day, which took place in early March, on the company's Tech Blog. It includes Netflix Earth, a 3D rotating globe that shows which programmes are being watched worldwide, and DualPinProtection, which stops your viewing partner watching shows that you've agreed to watch together. Netflix says that while these hacks are "very cool



and fun", they won't necessarily appear in the real world. However. we think DualPinProtection is definitely worth introducing. It would certainly prevent a lot of arguments!

Explore the Amazon rainforest in Street View

bit.ly/amazon367

Having previously explored remote areas on snowmobiles, camels and tricycles to capture Street View images, Google has used a

new form of transport - the zipline.

Constructing one in the Amazon rainforest allowed the Street View team to take

photographs from the upper

canopy to the forest floor, getting amazing close-ups of plants and animals. They also travelled down 500km of rivers, meeting 17 local communities of local people along the way, and walked 20km of forest trails. You'll find out how it was done on Google's Lat-Long blog (bit.ly/blog367). To go straight to the images, click the link above.

We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Shop at Google's new online store

store.google.com

Google has launched an online store selling its hardware - previously, products were tucked away in the Play Store under Devices. You can buy Nexus phones and tablets, Chromebooks, the Chromecast and Android Wear smartwatches, plus accessories such as cases and chargers. Postage is currently free, though Google says this could change at any time.



Drag and drop in **Google Drive for** Android

bit.ly/googledrive367

We know this issue's What's New Online has a strong Google flavour, but the company just keeps adding essential new tools to its products. For example, it has updated its Android app for Google Drive to let you drag and drop files and folders. Just



long-press to select what you want, then move your finger across the screen. Other new features include an improved PDF viewer and the ability to pin items to your device in one tap. Read more at bit.ly/drive367.

Lock your Android Lollipop 5.1 device

bit.ly/pop367

In its Lollipop 5.1 update, which is rolling out now, Google has added a security feature called Device Protection that locks your phone and



tablet if you lose it, or someone steals it. Your device is unlocked only when you sign into your Google account, even if it has been reset to the factory settings. To discover other new features, click the link above to read Google's blog post on the update. Visit our sister website Know Your Mobile to find out when your device will get Lollipop 5.1: bit.ly/kym367.

Follow a solar-powered plane around the world

bit.ly/solar367

You can follow the first attempt to fly a solar-powered plane around the world on the fantastic Flightradar24, which tracks aeroplanes in flight in real time. Piloted by Swiss pair André Borschberg and Bertrand Piccard, Solar Impulse 2 took off from Abu Dhabi on 9 March, and is expected to complete its journey in late July or early August.



TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@MarsOneProject

Updates on the controversial project to establish a permanent human settlement on Mars

@MBrundleF1

Thoughts on the new Formula One season from ex-driver turned TV commentator Martin Brundle

@abandonedpics

Poignant photos of derelict buildings and locations

@ComResPolls

Latest political polls from ComRes, which will be plentiful in the run-up to May's General Election

@Waterloo2015 BE

Events marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo

Open PDFs in Dropbox for Android

bit.ly/dropbox367

Dropbox has added a PDF viewer to its Android app, letting you view files even if you're offline, as long as you've downloaded them. It also has a new text-search tool for PDFs. Word and PowerPoint. See Dropbox's blog: bit.ly/boxblog367.

Google's cocktail instructions

Need to check whether a cocktail should be shaken or stirred? Google has added guides to its results page, so just search for 'How to make a Martini/Screwdriver/Salty Dog', or whatever other tipple you fancy.

Save clips anywhere in OneNote

www.onenote.com/clipper

OneNote's Clipper tool is better than ever because you can save notes to any location, not just the default of the Quick Notes section. See Microsoft's blog post on Clipper 2.0: bit.ly/clip367.



Apple Watch has arrived! And it costs up to £13,500

What happened?

Apple has finally released full details of its smartwatch - called the Apple Watch (www.apple.com/uk/watch) - and revealed that strapping one on your wrist will cost you as much as £13,500. Admittedly, that's the top-end Edition model, which comes in rose or yellow gold: at the affordable end of the range. you can pick up the Apple Watch Sport for a more reasonable £299 from 24 April, with "previews" in store from 10 April. The rest of the range includes a selection of materials and wrist sizes.

Aside from being "an incredibly accurate timepiece", the watch shows notifications from your iPhone; lets you make cashless payments; and offers health and fitness sensors. Additionally, you can personalise the watch face with numbers or animated animals.

One aspect many prospective buyers have been waiting to hear about is the watch's battery. Apple promises "all day" battery life, breaking that down into 90 "time checks", 90 notifications, 45 minutes of app use and a 30-minute workout over the course of 18 hours. It's impossible to say whether that's really enough battery life for a day until the Apple Watch is on your wrist. Apple added that the batteries should last for three years, and said it would offer battery replacements for a fee.

Apple also announced a new MacBook with a Retina display for £1,049. Unusually, this has a lowpowered, 1.1GHz chip and only one USB





port - which also functions as the charging plug for the new USB C specification that supports data transfer, additional screens and power. The new MacBook also features Apple's Force Touch trackpad, which is sensitive enough to deduce whether you're tapping or clicking, according to Apple.

How will it affect you?

The Watch's launch marks the true start of the smartwatch era. Although there are already smartwatches available that run Android and other platforms, Apple's take on wearable tech is the event we've all been waiting for.

If you want one, you should probably have pre-ordered it by now. The Watch is expected to quickly sell out - well, the cheaper models, anyway - not least because they feature Sapphire glass, which reports have suggested may be in short supply.

The MacBook is interesting for its use of the USB C port. The new specification means you can not only use USB to connect a laptop to your monitor and transfer data, but also to charge your PC. Plus, it's reversible: you will no longer have to use trial and error to slot the cable end into the port because it

will work either way round.

few spare

ports.

What do we think?

We're so used to Apple products costing more than rival versions that we rarely question the wisdon of the company's business decisions. Still, the Samsung Gear Live costs £170, about half the price of the cheapest Apple Watch, and even the more expensive Moto 360 is still only £199. That's quite a difference, and Apple will have to demonstrate that its take on wearable devices is worth shelling out for.

However, if you already own an iPhone or iPad, and you plan to buy a smartwatch, it makes sense to spend the extra money on the Apple Watch so your devices are integrated, rather than having an Android watch and an Apple phone. But if it's more than you can afford, try an alternative platform such as the Pebble (getpebble.com), which works with both Android and Apple.

The Watch will have even more appeal if you own an iPhone 6 Plus because it lets you stow your massive smartphone in a bag and still get your notifications on your wrist. Much of its success will depend on the apps that are developed for it, and that's one area where Apple shines.

We're not convinced that anyone needs a smartwatch enough to make the Apple Watch the next device to dominate tech, but if you're going to keep an eye on the success of wearables, this is the product to watch.

The MacBook provides an interesting insight into what Apple sees as the future of laptops. However, most of us aren't quite there yet. It's possible that wireless charging and Bluetooth peripherals mean we won't need cables and USB ports in the future, but for now we prefer to have the flexibility of a

What we think of this fortnight's top tech stories and rumours

Freak flaw patched by **Apple and Microsoft**



What happened?

The latest bug to hit web users has now been patched by Apple and Microsoft. The so-called Freak flaw was found in SSL and TLS security technology, and is the result of the US government banning the export of strong encryption in the early 1990s. Although that rule was later overturned, the bug could force browsers to downgrade their encryption from strong to "export grade", potentially allowing hackers to tap into secure connections.

Google patched Chrome and Android in the days following the discovery of the flaw; a week later, Apple and Microsoft released their own fixes. So far, there have been no known attacks exploiting the vulnerability, but millions of websites may still be at risk.

How will it affect you?

The Freak flaw makes it easier for hackers to break secure HTTPS connections to read your messages and steal your passwords, but the attacks would have to be targeted. Experts say it would take 75 computers at least seven hours to crack "export grade" encryption.

You'll need to restart your PC or phone to install the patches, so when iOS, Android or Windows nudges you to do so, follow the instructions. To find out if your browser is still at risk, go to https:// freakattack.com.

What do we think?

It's a shame that this bug was allowed to happen, and that weaker web protections continue to be used. Still, the various affected tech companies have quickly reacted to the problem. Now it's up to us to actually install the patches. This is the upside of software such as Chrome, which automatically updates to the latest version. For systems and software without automatic updates, you should manually install the offered patches as quickly as possible.



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EU drops plans to ban roaming charges

.....

What happened?

The EU is set to back-track on plans to abolish data-roaming charges, according to the BBC (bit .ly/bbcroaming367).

Documents seen by the BBC suggest that instead of scrapping charges from December, the measures could be postponed until 2018. The documents allegedly encourage carriers to add surcharges to domestic rates, even though the EU has been progressively lowering caps on the networks' roaming charges.

How will it affect you?

You'll still need to be careful when using your phone or tablet abroad to avoid racking up a huge

bill. Some mobile networks. including Three, have already scrapped data-roaming charges, both inside and outside Europe (although not in every country), so it might be worth switching if you can't face going on holiday without the web.

What do we think?

We're disappointed that these unreasonable charges will persist and potentially get even dearer. Although we try to use our phones as little as possible while on holiday, we should be able to do so without paying extortionate rates.



Google launches cheaper Chromebook Pixel

What happened?

Google unveiled a new version of its Chromebook Pixel (bit.ly/pixel367), the high-end laptop that runs the company's Chrome OS. Most Chromebooks are priced low - for example, the HP Chromebook 14 is a a bargain £299 - but the Pixel now costs £799. Although that's more expensive than rival models, it's £200 less than the first Pixel cost and it has the best specifications of any Chromebook yet available.

The updated Chromebook Pixel features a high resolution (2,560 x 1,700 pixels), 13in touchscreen display; the new Type C USB ports that support data transfer, extra monitors and charging (similar to the new Apple MacBook - see story on page 8); and an Intel Core i5 processor with a robust 8GB of memory.

For £200 more, Google is also offering a model with an Intel Core i7 processor and 16GB of RAM. That's a powerful combination for a web-based laptop but, like other Chromebooks, it only offers limited storage, relying on cloud services such as Google Drive instead.

How will it affect you?

If you like the idea of Chromebooks, but aren't convinced by the cheaper models, the eye-catching Pixel may be



more appealing, particularly because it comes from Google itself. Not only does it boast impressive specs and promise 12 hours of battery life, but its square corners give it a distinct, stylish look.

Still, the low price remains one of the main reasons for buying a Chromebook, alongside the easy-to-manage, autoupdating operating system. If you're buying a Chromebook only to check your email and for basic browsing, the Pixel is probably more powerful - and expensive - than necessary.

What do we think?

The Pixel is an odd device. It certainly looks lovely, and the long battery life and powerful processor have plenty of appeal, but the price puts it beyond the reach of many consumers. Still, Google has done a good job by shaving a solid slice off the cost, while significantly upgrading the specs, which is something we can only applaud. Knock a bit more off the price and you'll have our attention, and maybe even our credit card details.



Google Shop bit.ly/googlestore367

Google has just opened its first high-street store within a Currys PC World on Tottenham Court Road in central London. It's at the very front of the store, so you can't miss it. On entering the Google Shop, you're immediately greeted by an array of Chromebooks, but we were surprised to learn that Google's recently announced flagship model, the Chromebook Pixel (see story, above), won't be available to buy from the store. According to an employee, this decision was made by Currys PC World rather than Google, so it's possible that the retailer doesn't have confidence in the more expensive

As well as the Chromebooks, there's

plenty to interact with, starting with a 'Rube Goldberg machine' in the shop window. This contraption resembles a London-themed Google Doodle, and pressing one of its buttons releases

a metal ball, which certainly caught the attention of pedestrians passing by.

There's also a large Google Doodle wall in the store that you can decorate using a digital spray can. Remarkably, it detects your distance from the wall, so the area of coverage increases the further away from the wall you stand.

Another spectacular, multi-display



installation lets you interact with Google Earth using a joystick and touchscreen. You can zoom out to a perspective from space or zoom all the way in to Street View level, which has a dizzying wow

factor when viewed on such a large screen. You can also have a play with other Google products including the Chromecast and Nexus devices.

The Google Store doesn't quite compare to a typical Apple Store in size or scope, but there's plenty to do and you can also pick up a free Google goodie bag!



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Apple launching a music-streaming service?

Apple launches its new music-streaming service in June, according to reports, and it will be more expensive that it was originally planned to be.

The product, which is expected to replace the Beats Music service bought by the company last year, was anticipated to launch at the same Spring Forward event at which the Apple Watch was announced, on 9 March (see story on page 8). However, at the event there wasn't so much as a whisper about the service.

Now, Billboard reports (bit.ly/ billboard367) that the service will make its debut in June and won't offer any free tier, opting instead for a subscription-only model that will apparently cost more than expected.

Apple had been in negotiations with record labels to try to reduce the royalty fees it would pay so it could offer subscriptions for less than \$10 (£6.75), which would allow it to undercut rivals such as Spotify. However, it seems the music industry has stood firm and Apple will have to offer subscriptions for \$9.99 - just like everyone else - unless it's prepared to absorb the extra costs. But this isn't surprising, given that Spotify has been criticised for paying artists very little for the right to use their music.



That's not to say Apple's music service won't have anything special to offer users. It's apparently trying to negotiate exclusives with record labels and individual artists, although according to an industry source the company will have to "get out the

music-streaming party, but a June launch for its service seems sensible, once the fuss from the Watch has died down. It's interesting to learn that it's tried (and failed) to undercut rivals such as Spotify, but we bet it still has a few tricks up its sleeve

chequebook" if it wants to succeed. LIKELIHOOD RATING **JJJJ** Apple is a latecomer to the

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

Google Calendar now on

Google has finally released its popular calendar app for iOS. The app works with all the calendars on your iPhone or iPad, including iCloud and Exchange.



Argos tests 3D printing

Argos is selling custom 3D-printed jewellery online, allowing customers



to design their own accessories in gold and silver, priced from £50 to £220.

WE DON'T LIKE...

ISPs fail to satisfy customers

According to a survey conducted by Which?. customers of the UK's largest broadband



providers are unsatisfied with the service and speeds they've

Headphones damaging young ears

More than a billion young people are putting their hearing at risk by listening to music too loud on their headphones. according to a recent study by the World Health

Organisation.





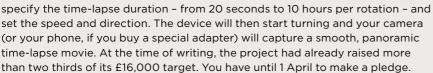
What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

TurnsPro

bit.ly/turnspro367 | From £45

With TurnsPro, you no longer need to have a steady hand and super-human patience to capture a panning, timelapse video. Just attach your camera to the mount,



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

BitTorrent program installs 'Bitcoin miner'

The latest update to the popular BitTorrent client uTorrent is bundled with Epic Scale, a program that can turn your PC into a 'Bitcoin miner'. It harnesses your system resources to create Litecoins, a virtual currency similar to Bitcoin, which can significantly slow down your PC. The developers of uTorrent have denied that Epic Scale is installed without the user's permission, saying that they are given the option to decline the 'offer', but the problem highlights the need to be vigilant about extra options when you install software. bit.ly/litecoin367

Watch out for new ransomware threat

Hundreds of mailboxes have been hit by spam emails with malicious

attachments that spread the infamous ransomware Cryptowall, according to researchers at Bitdefender Labs. The malware is delivered through CHM (Complied HTML) files, which are traditionally used for the Help manuals included with software. Once the file is opened, Cryptowall (an advanced variant of Cryptolocker) installs automatically on a victim's machine and encrypts its contents until they pay a 'ransom'. bit.ly/crypto367

PATCH TUESDAY: March

Once again, Microsoft's monthly security bulletin included a critical patch for Internet Explorer, to prevent the remote execution of malicious code when you visit an infected web page. The vulnerability gives an attacker the same user rights as you, especially if you have administrative rights on your system. Four other critical updates addressed Windows vulnerabilities, including one for a scripting vulnerability and a flaw in the way Windows loads DLL files. One patch fixed a problem with Adobe

Font Driver that could allow an attacker to remotely execute code to install programs; view, change and delete data; and create new accounts with full user rights. The other critical update patched known vulnerabilities in Office document formats.

All other updates were rated 'important' and are mostly too dull to mention, other than one fixing a flaw that could infect your PC through PNG files and another that could allow attackers to control and run malicious programs through Task Scheduler. bit.ly/march367

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Simon Edwards of **Dennis Technology** Labs (www.dennis technologylabs.com)



What important feature should free security software include that it doesn't at the moment? Anthony Barber, Facebook



improve personal privacy when using public Wi-Fi networks. This has yet to happen in paid-for security suites and is even less likely to appear in a free edition because a VPN service is expensive to run.

As far as changes to free anti-malware software go, I'd like to see certain things removed before anything else is added. In recent years, several companies including AVG. Avast and Avira have attempted to make money from their free software by pushing other companies' tools during installation. Some of this bundled software isn't particularly useful and sneaky tactics

are employed to trick you into installing a program without realising.

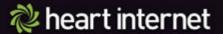
An increasingly common method is for security software to offer third-party applications that install alongside their own progam. Every time you fail to opt out of installing these extras (the tick boxes are often prechecked), the anti-virus company is paid a small amount of money.

Should I regularly change my email address as well as my password to safeguard against security breaches?

Anna Owens, Facebook

Regularly changing your email address probably won't

help, but using more than one address can, because it reduces the chance of being locked out of important accounts. For example, if attackers compromise your email account, they can move on to hijacking other services, such as your Twitter account and Bitcoin wallet, because those services rely on your email account to verify password resets. Using different email addresses for each of those services would reduce the damage an attacker could





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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

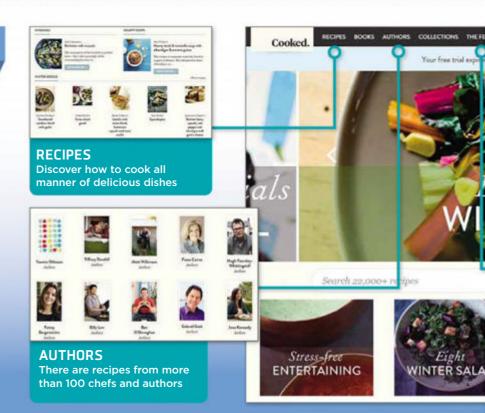
Cooked

www.cooked.com

The web is stuffed with recipe sites, but when they're as tasty as Cooked, there's always room for one more. It hosts entire cookbooks by culinary authors including Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Sarah Raven, totalling over 22,000 recipes. These are impressively varied and superbly presented, with huge, highquality photos; clear instructions; comments from the cooks; and handy options to save recipes to collections, share them on social media and print them. However, all this great stuff plus exclusive web content doesn't come free; a subscription costs £2.99 a month or £36 a year, with a free 30-day trial.

Our rating







EATING OUT

OpenTable

www.opentable.co.uk

Restaurant-booking service OpenTable (formerly called Toptable in the UK) has relaunched with a new logo, website and promise to be "warm and welcoming". Gone is the cluttered old layout in favour of a more subtle design, which works wonderfully on both mobile devices and desktop computers. We like the simple table-finding facility at the top of the page, which quickly reveals a huge choice of eateries that you can filter by price, cuisine and discounts, and lets you book your preferred time in two clicks. But best of all are the much improved restaurant pages, which usefully provide photos, reviews, a map and a menu all in one place. Bon appétit!

Our rating





TRANSPORT

Virgin Trains East Coast

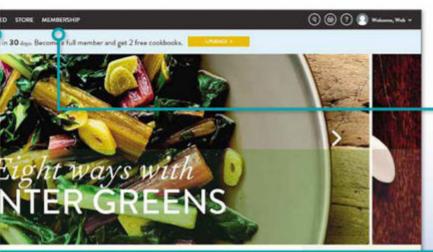
www.virgintrainseastcoast.com

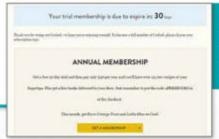
It's all change for passengers on the East Coast rail line, which is now owned by Virgin and has updated its website accordingly. The site had only recently been redesigned to excellent effect, so Virgin has wisely kept changes to a minimum. There's a new section for Nectar points and the colour scheme is now red and white rather than purple and blue, but the speedy ticket-booking facility and prominent service updates remain intact. Let's hope the rail service is as fast and friendly as the site.

Our rating



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



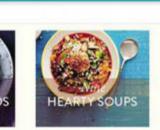


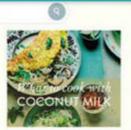
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THE FEED

Read the latest food news and interviews with contributors











RAC Garage Compare

Avoid getting ripped off by a dodgy

book a car service or MOT. Just enter

then choose a type of service to

garage by using this RAC site to find and

your registration number and postcode,

compare RAC-approved garages in your

area. The detailed results include price,

customer rating, whether the garage

offers a loan car, the earliest available

date and a map of locations. You can

nothing until the work is done. The site is

book in a couple of clicks, and pay

quick and easy to use, and clearly

explains every option - unlike less

racgaragecompare.co.uk



POLITICS

RADIO

RateYourMP

rateyourmp.com

With the General Election almost upon us, this site provides useful information about your local MP and gives you the chance to rate their performance and compare it with other MPs. The statistics include their salary and expenses, how much money their office costs to run, and the number and percentage of Parliamentary debates they've voted in. The figures can be eye-opening, and could influence your decision on 7 May. Until then, you can have your say by registering with this site and rating your MP out of five in response to questions such as: "Do you trust him/her?".



RadioAudio

radioaudio.co.uk

If you hear a memorable moment on the radio, you can save having to dig it out on catch-up and check out this site instead. Radio Audio gives the radio industry a place to share its best bits, but there's nothing to stop the rest of us delving into its audio delights. These include clips from station launches, awkward interviews (such as Green Party leader Natalie Bennett's appearance on LBC) and amusing outtakes, as well as the latest jingles. All the content is presented in embedded SoundCloud and YouTube players, so you can listen to it without leaving the site.

Our rating

scrupulous mechanics!









NEW



🔀 Best New Websites



POLITICS

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org

Amnesty International has relaunched its website to coincide with its annual report on the state of the world's human rights. You can download this as a PDF or browse it online through photos of key events, videos that combine interviews with disturbing footage, and a written summary of the last year. This covers such topics as international failures, the horrors of war and, more optimistically, recent success stories for human rights. The site's bold new design presents information in a clearer, image-led manner that's visually engaging and makes it easier to find out what Amnesty does and how you can help.

Our rating





LIFESTYLE

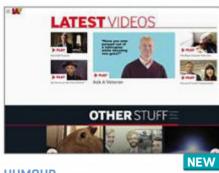
Saga Digital Legacy

www.saga.co.uk/legal

This site from Saga Legal Services asks you to consider what will happen to your personal data after you die. It covers various aspects of your digital legacy, including cancelling subscriptions and saving valuable content, and provides a helpful guide to deactivating your accounts with popular web services. This tells you what to do, what you need and who to contact, whether by email, phone or post. Sadly, the site only delivers its guides in PDF format, which may make them easy to print but online versions would have let you click through to related resources and share the guides on social media.

Our rating





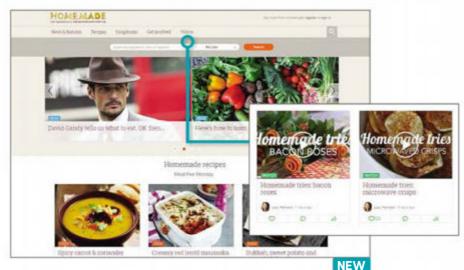
HUMOUR

Internet Action Force

Described as a rapid-response team of "socially awkward nerds", Internet Action Force provides a wry take on modern life through original videos and clips gathered from around the web. You can watch cute animals messing about, including a capybara in a supermarket; meet 'glorious weirdos', such as a man who eats light bulbs; and follow silly recipes, including 'cooking for horrible vegans'. Whether you find the content amusing will be a matter of personal taste, but the variety means there should be something to tickle your humour buds, and the IAF's own videos are fun and well-made.

Our rating





FOOD

Homemade

www.homemadebyyou.co.uk

If you don't want to pay a subscription for Cooked (see separate review), this "digital food network" from Sainsbury's and the Huffington Post provides a free alternative. Recipes from the supermarket's magazine are mixed with foodie news stories from HuffPo and content created for the site, which you can search by ingredient, dish or keyword. The lively tone is complemented by a simple, smart design, which makes effective use of photos and videos. You can save recipes and articles to a 'scrapbook'; suggest different ingredients to use; and take part in challenges to share your culinary skills with the community. It's a great mix of practical advice and fun.

Our rating





MUSIC

Tradiio

www.tradiio.com

This interactive music-streaming service invites you to discover and invest in up-and-coming artists. When you listen to a song on the site, you earn virtual coins that advance your progress as a talent spotter. This currency can then be invested in artists to boost their profiles and earn them various rewards, such as festival slots and studio time. Successful talent spotters are also given rewards, and you can earn more coins by referring friends and endorsing Tradiio on social media. It's a terrific idea, with a smart, Spotify-style design, that could see you involved with the next big thing from the very beginning.

Our rating





The first things you'll notice about the revamped BBC News site are the change from dark to bright red in the header, and a cleaner, more mobile-friendly design, which instantly make it feel fresh. The streamlined navigation bar tucks less important options such as Magazine into a drop-down More menu, and you can now play more video and audio stories from the homepage. Sadly, videos still use Flash rather than HTML5, but hopefully this will be fixed in a future update. Our main grumbles are that the redesigned site needlessly replaces the 'Last updated' time at the top of the page with timestamps on individual items, and annoyingly sticks Analysis segments in the middle of stories. Otherwise, it all looks great!

Our rating



Loaf

loaf.com

With its squishy sofas, cosy beds and comfy chairs, browsing the Loaf website is a luxurious experience. Its pastel colours and friendly tone make a refreshing change from the hard sell of other homeware stores, and reflect the handmade nature of its stock. We like that you can 'meet' the creators of the furniture and fittings, and order free fabric swatches, and that product info helpfully includes suggestions for complementary items. Delivery and assembly of items is free in and around London, and there's a flexible 14-day returns policy. Loaf is a superb if pricey website, for purveyors of lovely stuff.

Our rating

 \star





ALSO NEW

HISTORY

Nelson in Greenwich

nelson.greenwich.co.uk

This interesting historical site explores Admiral Horatio Nelson's connections with Greenwich. You can follow the Nelson trail around the Royal borough; discover which pubs and roads are named after Nelson and things associated with him, including the famous Trafalgar Tavern; and look at copies of archive newspaper articles about his achievements and death.

TECHNOLOGY

Mix Your Watch

mixyourwatch.com

If you're keen to get the "highly customisable" Apple Watch, you can use this website to decide how your timepiece will look. It provides options to personalise your watch by selecting the colour and material of the band and case, including brown leather, fluorescent blue and steel. But you can't (yet) order these embellishments.

FOOD

XXX Mints

www.xxxmints.co.uk

You don't have to have halitosis to enjoy this site for the UK's favourite extra strong mint. As well as fun facts and a brief history of mints that traces them back to Roman times, there's a monthly 'Spot the Ball' contest. Click a square and you could win a prize, including a Leicester Tigers kit and, of course, packs of XXX Mints.

FILM

Buy Minions

www.buyminions.com

Fans of the Despicable Me films will love this site dedicated entirely to the squeaky yellow Minions. You can buy Minions mugs, toys, phone cases and more; read Minions facts and quotes; and browse fan art and cakes. We assume the products are officially licensed from the copyright holder, but if you're mad for Minions you probably won't mind if they aren't.

Unlock the door to the **Hobbit Hole**

Lots of websites use the Konami code to conceal Easter Eggs, but UK Oak Doors (www.ukoakdoors .co.uk) does it in a particularly inventive way. Visit the store and

enter the code: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left Right, B, A to be taken to a unique product

page. One is

for Boo's Door (from the film Monsters Inc) and another is the famous front door from The Simpsons, but our favourite unlocks the door to Bag End, the Hobbit Hole of Bilbo Baggins. It's priced at just under half a million quid, and clicking 'Add to Basket' opens another surprise. Turn to page 49 for more Easter Eggs.

Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Google to punish desktoponly sites from April

From 21 April, Google will start imposing ranking penalties on websites that aren't mobilefriendly. If your site doesn't switch to a more readable version when viewed on a mobile phone-sized screen, it could drop down the Google rankings, particularly as a result of searches made from

If you haven't already made sure your site will survive what some pundits have started calling 'mobilegeddon', check out Google's Mobile Friendly tool at bit.ly/googmob367 to see if your site will be in the firing line.

Wix offers dynamic new apps

Wix (www.wix.com) is continuing to push out new features to its web-building service with the addition of three new apps. Rollover Image Effect (bit.ly/

roll367) lets you add interesting transitions to your images when your visitors hover a mouse over them, such as changing a black and white image to colour or bringing a blurred picture into focus; Social Media Stream (bit.ly/ stream367) creates a montage of your tweets and Facebook posts; and Lumifish Timeline (bit.ly/ lumi367) lets you create interesting interactive timelines of important events.

All three apps have free options, but you get more features if you pay, with prices starting at £1.90 per month.

Deal of the Fortnight

Easyspace (www.easyspace.com) is offering 30 per cent off '.email', '.company', '.guru', '.xyz' and '.tips' domains. Type newgtld30 at the checkout to get the discount.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Matthew Telfer, UK Marketing Director, Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.uk)



Can you offer any advice on promoting my website? I can't get my head around SEO.

Martin Walker, Twitter

SEO's huge traffic potential can't be ignored. A great place to start is Moz's beginner's guide to SEO (bit

.ly/moz367). A quick way to drive traffic to your website is Pay Per Click Advertising using Google AdWords. Be clear on your budget and your spend per conversion before you start. Google's start guide is as comprehensive as you would expect (bit.ly/ payper367). Your marketing shouldn't stop once you have acquired a customer. Successful customers stay longer and spend more. Help your customers to use your products and service through online support, guides and proactive customer support.



MINI WORKSHOP | Experiment with WordPress themes without breaking your website 🖣 Instant WordPress: www.instantwp.com | 🕒 10 mins | ಿ XP, Vista, 7, 8.1+

Instant WordPress is a great way to set up a WordPress site on your hard drive or USB memory drive, so you can experiment with new designs without breaking your existing site.



Download the software and double-click the file to install it to a folder. You can run it from a USB drive because it runs independently and doesn't need to make any changes to your PC. Double-click the InstantWP icon to run the software, then click WordPress Frontpage 11 to view the standard site. 2



The site comes with a few pages of dummy content, but adding a few posts and pages of your own will make the site feel more like yours. To transfer templates from your existing site, use FTP software to move them from your host's wp-content folder 11 to the equivalent in your Instant WordPress installation. 2



You can now make changes to your blog templates 💶 on the local server and see how they look with your content. If you're making minor changes to another theme, consider converting it into a child theme (bit.ly/child367) so that updates to the parent theme are applied. When you're happy, copy the files back to your live site using FTP.

With APC Back-UPS, your digital

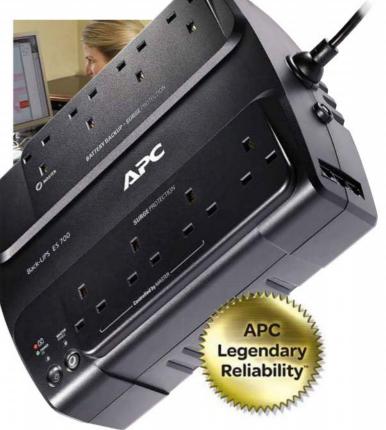












even when the power goes off

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Reliable power backup for 24/7 availability

Whether DVRing your favorite show, updating your Facebook status, or playing a live network game, you depend on your home electronics every day, all day. That's why APC by Schneider Electric™ has designed battery backup solutions that protect the constant availability and connectivity you expect... and depend on.

Peace-of-mind protection on two levels

When the power goes out, our popular Back-UPS™ units go to work. They instantly switch your home technologies to emergency power, allowing you to work through brief power outages or safely shut down your systems so you won't lose valuable files — such as digital photos and media libraries. They also feature surge outlets to guard your electronics and data from 'dirty' power and damaging power surges — even lightning. So you get two levels of protection in every APC Back-UPS unit!

Energy-saving insurance for what matters most

Our Back-UPS units protect your home office, digital living and home media applications, notebook computers, DVRs, and gaming application. And since we now offer energy-efficient models that reduce electricity costs through unique power-saving outlets, you can realize true energy savings regardless of the applications you're backing up. Throughout your home, the APC Back-UPS is the cost-saving insurance you need to stay up and running and reliably safeguarded from both unpredictable power and wasteful energy drains.



Keep your electronics up and your energy use down!

ES Series

The ever-popular ES models are priced affordably yet provide enough extended runtime to allow you to work through short and medium power outages. Some power-saving models have been designed to actively reduce energy costs.

The energy-efficient ES Series

The new ES boasts innovative power-saving outlets, which automatically shut off power to unused devices when your electronics are turned off or asleep, eliminating wasteful electricity drains.

BE 700G-UK

- ·8 outlets
- 405 watts/700 VA
- Up to 80 minutes runtime
- Telephone/network protection

BE 550G-UK

- · 8 outlets
- 330 watts/550 VA
- Up to 55 minutes runtime
- Telephone/network protection





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We test and compare the latest products

Multiroom audio speakers

Andy Shaw tests nine multiroom speakers that can stream your favourite music into any room around your home

ultiroom speakers use their own Wi-Fi or Bluetooth networks to stream music from one speaker to another, and can play music from your mobile device, PC, internet streaming service or network media server. You can start off with one speaker and build up by adding more speakers to more rooms as and when you need them. This lets you switch your

music from one room to another as you move around the house or play tunes in several rooms at once.

Although these speakers are a little more expensive than standard Bluetooth models, they're a worthwhile investment. Most of the nine models we tested provide superb sound quality, and future purchases will add to your current speakers instead of replacing them.

HOW WE TESTED

We listened to a range of different musical styles on the speakers, from classical to rock, to compare their sound quality. We also tested different file types and streaming services to check which ones the speakers worked with, and used their multiroom apps to find out which were the easiest to use.

Sonos Play:1 | £167 | www.currys.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★

Sonos has been developing its excellent multiroom audio for well over a decade. The Play:1, which has been available for around 18 months, is Sonos's entry-level speaker. It's relatively small but provides brilliant sound quality at an affordable price.

The build quality is exceptional. The speaker

comes in black or white, with a metal grille that wraps around it. The body is uncluttered, with just an Ethernet port and a mounting point on the back. The power transformer has been built into the unit, and the power cable connects to the bottom, so there's just a slim cable to hide away.

The speaker is great, but the Sonos app is even more impressive. It's beautifully presented and laid-out, and easy to navigate. It's better integrated with music services than any of the other apps we tested, and works directly

with Spotify, for example, so you don't need to use the separate Spotify app. You can even stream different songs to different speakers in different rooms, if you've got more than one Sonos device.

As well as streaming music over the internet, you can use the app to send music stored on the

device vou're using to

operate the speaker, or use it as a conduit to any NAS or shared PC drives connected to your network.

The Play:1 can put out a surprising volume of sound for such a small speaker. We weren't expecting such depth and warmness of tone, and it sounds even better when paired with a second speaker. As a standalone device, we preferred the Samsung M3's sound, but it's worth taking a marginal reduction in audio quality to get the excellent Sonos interface.



We felt that the Sonos speaker's sound quality was slightly inferior to the Samsung M3, but we remained extremely impressed with its range of features. The software completely won us over, providing brilliant apps and the best integration with music services. The quality of Sonos's more expensive speakers rises sharply, too, so if you were thinking of using this as a starting point for adding more speakers in the future, the Play:1 comes highly recommended.



Pure Jongo T4X | £125.90 www.go-electrical.co.uk

EATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★☆

Most multiroom speaker manufacturers use their own Wi-Fi standards to allow their speakers to share music with one another, but Pure uses its parent company Imagination

Technology's Bluetooth

Caskeid system. Because it's



based on Bluetooth, any service you can run on your Bluetooth mobile device can be sent to the speaker, so you can basically play anything you like, through any service. If you'd prefer to use the Jongo's own Pure Connect app, you can link it to Pure's streaming service, which costs £4.99 per month and has 15 million songs, or there's a free version limited to streaming radio and podcasts. The speaker's sound quality is good for the price with a strong bass, though we found mids and trebles weren't sufficiently separated in some tracks. It can play loud enough to fill a room without distorting and you can link two speakers to play music in stereo.

VERDICT



The T4X is keenly priced for such a good-quality speaker. It plays music from any service that runs on your Bluetooth-enabled devices, or you can use its own app to play radio stations, podcasts and Pure's subscriber music-streaming service.

Samsung M3 | £119.99

www.electricshop.com

FEATURES ★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★☆



This speaker from Samsung provides superb sound at an affordable price, and came close to clinching our Gold Award. It easily manages to fill a room with music and we think it sounds marginally better than Sonos and Pure's speakers.

You can connect your mobile device to a single speaker via Bluetooth, to play music from a streaming service. The speaker has an internet radio built-in, which you configure through the mobile app, so you can play your favourite stations via the speaker itself.

If you have more than one speaker, you can control the multiroom functions via the app. This can access some popular streaming services, but for Spotify, you'll need a Premium account (£9.99 per month). It's less versatile than Sonos, though, because you can't play different tracks on different speakers.

VERDICT



On sound quality alone, the Samsung M3 came top, but the Pure's multiroom Bluetooth is more flexible and the Sonos has a vastly superior app, which makes them better all-rounders.

BEST OF THE REST

Bluesound Pluse £599 www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk ***

If you only want the best audio, no matter how much it costs, you could pay £20 per month for CD-quality music-streaming service Tidal (tidalhifi.com). The Bluesound Pulse is the only speaker in this test that supports it, and the sound quality is amazing. However, it's far from cheap, and this speaker is around four times the price of our award winners.

LG Music Flow H7 2279 www.currys.co.uk | ★★★★☆

The sound quality from LG's Music Flow H7 is better than the cheaper models, but at around twice the price of our awarding-winning speakers, it ought to be. It does justice to better quality digital music and it supports CD-quality 24-bit/192KHz FLAC and WAV audio files, which hold more sound data than compressed formats such as MP3, so you get more audible detail. It's bit of a halfway house, though, and doesn't match the more expensive Bluesound Pulse for quality.

Samsung M5 | £230

www.currys.co.uk | ***

The big brother of the Bronze Award-winning M3, the Samsung M5 is a bigger, better speaker, but it's also more expensive. It suffers from the same problems as Samsung's smaller model, including the requirement to pay for a full Spotify Premium account to stream the service through its multiroom app.

LG Music Flow H3 £150 www.johnlewis.com | ★★★☆☆

Like the LG Music Flow H7, the H3 can handle CD-quality audio files that other speakers of this price can't. However, we were disappointed with the results because the quality of the sound from the speaker didn't match the quality of the file it was playing. You also need an additional £39 Flow R1 Hub device to turn two LG speakers into a multiroom system.

Bowers & Wilkins A5 | £399 www.johnlewis.com | ★★★☆☆

The Bowers & Wilkins A5 looks and sounds wonderful but it's limited to Apple AirPlay, so it will only work with things that can be played through an iOS device or through iTunes from a PC or Mac. Android users would have to root their devices to play music from their apps.

Bowers & Wilkins A7 £699 www.johnlewis.com | ★★★☆☆

Like the Bowers & Wilkins A5, the A7 also works through AirPlay, which is the most restrictive system in this test, both in terms of multiroom functionality and as a single speaker. It's a shame, because although it's expensive, this speaker sounds amazing. If you're a Mac or iOS user with money to spare, it's a great choice.

Group Test Speakers

	WebUser GOLD AWARD	Web User SILVER AWARD	WebUser BRONZE AWARD		
	Sonos Play:1	Pure Jongo T4X	Samsung M3	Bluesound Pulse	LG Music Flow H7
WEBSITE	www.sonos.com	www.pure.com	www.samsung.com/uk	www.bluesound.com	www.lg.com
PRICE	£167	£125.90	£119.99	£599	£279
BUY FROM	www.currys.co.uk	www.go-electrical .co.uk	www.electricshop.com	www.sevenoaks soundandvision.co.uk	www.currys.co.uk
SPEAKERS	2	2	2	5	4
RMS POWER OUTPUT	Not disclosed	50W	Not disclosed	80W	70W
AUDIO INPUTS	X	3.5mm stereo	X	S/PDIF	3.5mm stereo
AUDIO OUTPUTS	X	X	X	X	X
USB PORT	X	USB (charging and optional Ethernet only)	X	√	X
NETWORKING	SonosNet (802.11n Wi-Fi), 1 x 10/100 Ethernet	802.11g Wi-Fi, Bluetooth (A2DP)	802.11n (dual-band) Wi-Fi, Bluetooth (SBC)	802.11n (dual-band) Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet, optional Bluetooth (SBC)	802.11n (dual-band) Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet, optional Bluetooth (SBC)
NFC	X	X	X	X	1
APPS	Android, iOS	Android, iOS	Android, iOS, Windows, Mac	Android, iOS, Windows, Mac	Android, iOS
STREAMING FORMATS	SonosNet mesh network	Bluetooth Caskeid	Samsung mesh network	BluOS	LG mesh network
SUPPORTED SERVERS	UPnP, SMB	X	DLNA	SMB	DLNA
AUDIO FORMATS	AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG, WAV	AAC, MP2, MP3, WMA	AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG, WAV, WMA	AAC, AIFF, FLAC, MP3, OGG, WAV, WMA	FLAC, MP3, WAV
INTERNET-STREAMING SERVICES	Deezer, Google Play Music, Napster, Rdio, Spotify, TuneIn	Pure Connect, other services require phone app	8tracks, Deezer, Napster, Rdio, Spotify Connect, TuneIn	HDTracks, Qobuz, Rdio, Spotify, Tidal	Deezer, Napster, Spotify, TuneIn
DIMENSIONS	161 x 12 x 12mm	305 x 165 x 146mm	250 x 145 x 114mm	420 x 197 x 190mm	370 x 232 x 110 mm
WEIGHT	1.8kg	3kg	1.9kg	6.1kg	4.1kg
WARRANTY	One year return-to-base	Three years return-to-base	One year return-to-base	One year return-to-base	One year return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

It's important for your first multiroom speaker to sound great, but there are other factors to consider: it has to be able to play music from your favourite services; and if it's too expensive, you'll never be able to afford extra speakers to add later. So although the Sonos Play:1 doesn't have the best sound of the speakers in this test, it's great for the price and has a brilliant app to control it. This balance of quality and value makes it worthy of our Gold Award.

The Silver Award-winning Pure Jongo T4X is cheaper than the Play:1 but it sounds almost as good. Its multiroom software isn't as slick, but it uses Bluetooth so you can play music from any apps you like. The Samsung M3 wins the Bronze Award for producing the best sound for less than £200. However, it didn't merit a Gold or Silver award because the software controlling the multiroom function isn't as good as Sonos's.





₩eb User's Best Buys

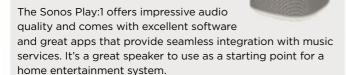
Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

MULTIROOM SPEAKER

Sonos Play:1

£167 from www.currys.co.uk Date tested: March 2015



NEW!

KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg

Samsung 850 Pro 256GB

£136.03 from www.kikatek.com Date tested: February 2015



The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.

KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) = 53p per GB = SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10 years warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

TABLET

Google Nexus 9

£319 from play.google.com Date tested: February 2015



The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen, even better than the iPad Air 2's, and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.

KEY SPECS

8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com Date tested: January 2015

This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.



KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

WIRELESS ROUTER

D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com Date tested: December 2014



If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price.

KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz = 802.11b/g/n = 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed Six internal antennas 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption = 1 x USB 3 port = 217 x 123 x 102mm = One-year return-to-base warranty

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com Date tested: November 2014



This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

📆 Web User's Best Buys

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www .kikatek.com

Date tested:

November 2014

The Cherry MX-Board

3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical

keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It's quiet for a mechanical model but still makes more noise than a standard keyboard. It doesn't have a lot of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.

KEY SPECS

104 keys ■ 1 x USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm ■ 0.83kg ■ Win-Key lock

NAS DRIVE

Asustor AS-202TE

£199.66 from

www.scan.co.uk

Date tested: September 2014

This NAS drive put in an excellent performance in our tests, transferring files over our

network faster than any of the other devices we tested. It has an impressive range of tools, including an HDMI output for streaming to TV.

KEY SPECS

EXT4 file system ■ SATA3 hard drive ■ 2 x 3.5in bays ■ 1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet ■ 2 x USB 2 ports, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ 1 x HDMI (1.4a) ■ 1 x 3.5mm mini-jack ■ 230 x 164 x 108mm ■ 1.87kg ■ Two-year return-to-base warranty

HD MONITOR

BenQ EW2740L

£194 from www.ebuyer.com Date tested: July 2014

The BenQ EW2740L is an excellent-value 27in monitor with good image quality. It supports MHL, so you can connect a compatible mobile device to it, and has two HDMI ports and one VGA port.



KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 2W stereo speakers ■ MHL support ■ 2 x HDMI and 1 x VGA ports ■ 320 x 115 x 95mm ■ One-year return-to-base warrantv

BUDGET LAPTOP

Asus X200MA

£175.55 from

www.amazon.co.uk

Date tested: October 2014

This is a compact. portable laptop at a great price that will manage the latest version of Windows and provide more than four hours of battery life.

KEY SPECS

2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2830 dual-core processor ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 2GB memory ■ 11.6in (non-touch) screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 1 x USB 3 port, 2 x USB 2 ports ■ 1 x 10/100 Ethernet, 802.11n dual-band Wi-Fi ■ 302 x 200 x 26mm ■ 1.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

WQHD MONITOR

AOC q2770Pqu

£367.96 from

www.dabs.com

Date tested: August 2014

The AOC q2770Pqu has an exceptional, high-quality screen and is very reasonably priced. Its

settings are preconfigured, so you don't need to tweak them to improve the display, and it has all the ports you'll ever need.

KEY SPECS

27in widescreen ■ 2,560 x 1,440 pixels resolution ■ Portrait mode ■ Adjustable stand ■ 2 x 2W speakers ■ DisplayPort, DVI, HDMI, VGA, 2 x USB 3.0 and 2 x USB 2.0 ports ■ 642 x 428 x 245mm ■ 8kg ■ Three-year return-to-base warranty

CHROMEBOOK

Acer C720P Chromebook

£244.81 from www.ilgs.net Date tested: June 2014

This fantastic Chromebook provides excellent overall performance,

respectable battery life and a good collection of ports. It's got a smart touchscreen, comfy keyboard and touchpad, and starts up in no time at all.

KEY SPECS

1.4GHz Intel Celeron 2955U processor ■ 16GB storage ■ 2GB memory ■ 11.6in screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 7.5 hours battery life ■ USB 3, USB 2 and HDMI ports ■ 288 x 204 x 20mm ■ 1.35kg



SOFTWARE & SERVICES

BACK-UP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from bit.ly/syncback366 Date tested: March 2015

NEW! SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you

know what you need from your back-ups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.

KEY FEATURES

Synchronize: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore back-up files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule back-ups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2015

£17.99 from bit.ly/kaspoffer Date tested: January 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title

Computeractive is selling it at the readeroffer price of £17.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.



Anti-virus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts Advanced parental control Licences for one, three, and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly ■ Multi-Device version for Mac and Android protection

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014

With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides

everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit)

- Bundled photo organiser Content-aware edits
- Guided edits People-beautifier tools RAW support

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VIDEO EDITING

Adobe **Premiere Elements 13**

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk Date tested: December 2014



Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better videoediting software for the price.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Burn to DVD and Blu-ray ■ Image stabiliser ■ Stop-motion capture

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com Date tested: August 2014



Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

15GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month.

Best Free Software

FILE-SHARING TOOL

BitTorrent Sync 2.0

getsync.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/

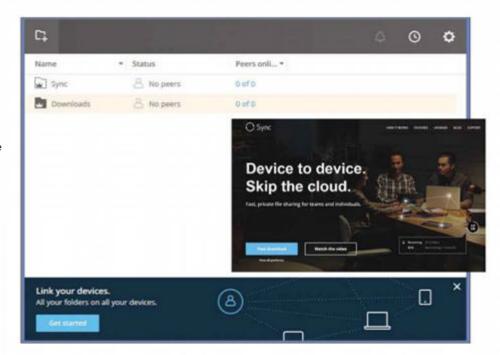
Vista/7/8+ File size: 5.4MB

BitTorrent may be synonymous with the illegal sharing of music, movies and TV shows, but it's actually ideal for sharing any type of large file over the internet, not just those that infringe copyright

Sync is based on the BitTorrent protocol, and lets you share and sync folders securely between devices, including PCs, phones and tablets. Unlike cloud services such as Dropbox, BitTorrent establishes a direct connection between your devices so there are no third parties involved, which makes sharing much faster.

The biggest change in BitTorrent Sync 2.0 is the addition of a paid-for Pro version, which adds many more features to the software and will set you back \$39.99 (£27) annually per user. As a result of this new tier, free users are now limited to synchronising a maximum of 10 folders, but there are still no limits on file sizes and transfer speeds.

The upside to this change is that you



now get a 30-day free trial of all the features available in Sync Pro, which include the ability to change a user's permission level when approving their connection request; and the option to link your devices together using a private identity. BitTorrent says this is the "private alternative to having an account in the cloud", and it's certainly a more secure one.

Other notable improvements to Sync include being able to share a folder and approve a connection from all your devices, not just the one that originally shared the content; and the option to pause the syncing of individual folders. You can also now delete a folder from the file system when you disconnect from it, to prevent anyone else from seeing its contents.

MINI WORKSHOP | Share folders with friends using BitTorrent Sync



If you naven to use the poly before, or you've set it up on If you haven't used BitTorrent Sync another device, you should first click the Add Folder button 11 and browse for the item you want to add. The folder will appear in the interface, showing its name 2 and status 3 (number of connected peers). Hover your mouse over the location and click Share. 4



Shared folders can be Read Only or Read & Write. 💶 You can use the Security options 2 to choose whether new peers must be approved by you, and set limits on how long a folder is shared for and how many times a link can be used. You can share the link by email, copy it or generate a QR code for accessing shared folders on a mobile. 3



Click the uned access of a shared folder to access Click the three dots on the far right additional options. You can pause syncing, 1 'Sync all' 2 and disconnect the folder. 3 You can configure the software through Preferences (top right) 4 and view past actions in the History. 5 The title bar shows how many days of your Pro trial remain.

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



MEDIA PLAYER

Zoom Player 10

www.inmatrix.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ File size: 18.2MB

This free media player can handle most common audio and video formats and DVDs. Features include a full-screen mode, file browser, playlist editor, audio equaliser, bookmarks, play history and colour controls. Version 10's wizard lets you configure the installation based on the target device (PC, Home Theatre PC or tablet); and has a new media scanner to automatically find playable content on your system.

• Select the custom option during installation and deselect the bundled extras.



PDF TOOL

IceCream PDF Split&Merge 2

icecreamapps.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+ File size: 8.3MB

PDF Split&Merge lets you extract individual pages from a large PDF file, and merge several files into a single PDF document. The latest version of the program has been optimised to work with very large files (and a greater number of files in merge mode), and the built-in PDF reader has been optimised and upgraded, too. You can now sort files by name, and password-protect merged documents.



FILE UNLOCKER

File Governor 2.0

bit.ly/filegov367

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8/10 File size: 1.8MB

Windows sometimes locks files, preventing you from deleting or renaming them. There's usually a good reason for this (often because it's in use by another program), but not always. File Governor lets you unlock files so you can perform the required actions. You can scan for locked files, kill a file's process (which may free it) and unlock one or more items. The program also works in Windows 10.

New Windows 8 Apps

Comics++

bit.ly/comics367

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 928KB

This simple comic-book reader can open all popular comic formats and PDF files. It includes a page scrollbar with thumbnail previews, history tracking and a choice of page-fit modes.



Transport Empire

bit.ly/transport367

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 206MB

Similar to titles such as Transport Tycoon Deluxe and Railroad Tycoon, the aim of this game is to build roads, develop cities and manage various modes of transport.



Unstream

bit.ly/unstream367

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 1.83MB

This is an unofficial front end for Twitch, the popular live streaming website that lets you watch games as they're being played. The free version is ad-supported, while the paid-for edition costs 99p.



Best Free Software

SYSTEM TOOLS

Technicians Toolbox

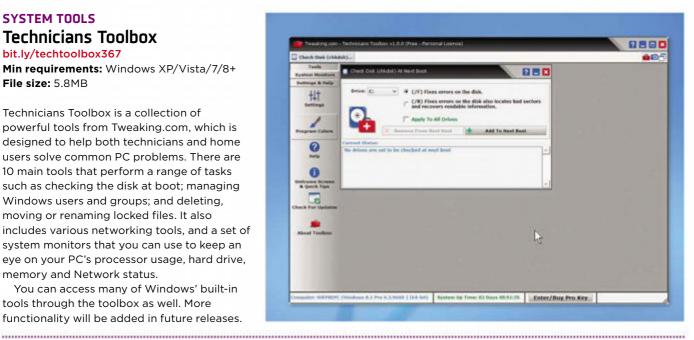
bit.ly/techtoolbox367

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 5.8MB

Technicians Toolbox is a collection of powerful tools from Tweaking.com, which is designed to help both technicians and home users solve common PC problems. There are 10 main tools that perform a range of tasks such as checking the disk at boot; managing Windows users and groups; and deleting, moving or renaming locked files. It also includes various networking tools, and a set of system monitors that you can use to keep an eye on your PC's processor usage, hard drive, memory and Network status.

You can access many of Windows' built-in tools through the toolbox as well. More functionality will be added in future releases.



VIDEO EDITOR

VSDC Free Video Editor 3.0

bit.ly/vsdceditor367

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 29.3MB

If you're looking for a powerful free video editor, VSDC's software is worth a look. This updated version makes video editing fully non-linear, which means you can place video clips and objects anywhere you like on the timeline. The program's way of handling clips and applying effects has also been overhauled, and the software offers a wealth of new editing options, while improving and speeding up existing features.

The wizard makes it quick and easy to add scenes and transitions, and the program offers a good selection of video (and audio) effects, including Auto Levels, Auto Contrast, Temperature, Sharpen, Blur and Old Film.

BOOTABLE USB CREATOR

Rufus 2.0

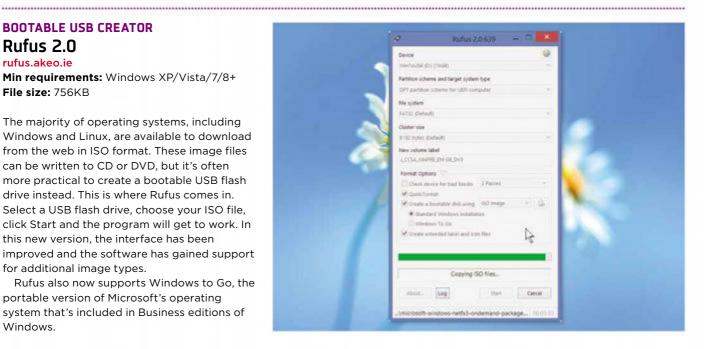
rufus.akeo.ie

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 756KB

The majority of operating systems, including Windows and Linux, are available to download from the web in ISO format. These image files can be written to CD or DVD, but it's often more practical to create a bootable USB flash drive instead. This is where Rufus comes in. Select a USB flash drive, choose your ISO file, click Start and the program will get to work. In this new version, the interface has been improved and the software has gained support for additional image types.

Rufus also now supports Windows to Go, the portable version of Microsoft's operating system that's included in Business editions of Windows.





GAME Forever

bit.ly/forever367

Min requirements: Windows XP/ Vista/7/8+, Mac OS X or Linux File size: 11.7MB

You won't, as the title implies, want to play this game forever, but this physicsbased checkout simulator is still annoyingly entertaining. Your job at Strawberry Fields Supermarket is to scan the numerous items on the conveyer belt (which, due to the physics, is actually pretty tricky) and

Don't install...

Uniblue **DriverScanner**

www.uniblue.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 5.4MB

Making sure that your drivers are up to date helps to keep your system running smoothly, but you shouldn't have to pay the £19.95 that DriverScanner charges. For that money, you'd expect it to be lightning fast, but it's really no better than a free driver scanner and you can get all its tools from DriveTheLife (see right).



DriveTheLife

www.drivethelife.com

...Install this instead

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 8.6MB

Unlike most driver scanners, DriveTheLife is completely free to use and works quickly and efficiently. Just click the Scan button and it will detect all missing, corrupt and outdated drivers on your PC, and let you repair and update them individually or all in one go. Sensibly, the program insists that you back up your current drivers before you make any changes so you can restore them if you encounter any problems.

DriveTheLife's colourful, simple interface makes it very straightforward to use and, although it's free, it doesn't bother you with adverts or come bundled with adware.





UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



take cash from customers.

MEDIA PLAYER VLC Media Player 2.2.0

www.videolan.org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ File size: 27.2MB

This is a fairly major update to the media player. VLC now automatically rotates vertical videos from phones, and can resume playback from where you left off. There's improved support for new HD video codecs, and extensions can now be downloaded in the program.



PAINT PROGRAM Artweaver Free 5.0.5

www.artweaver.de/en

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 11.6MB

Artweaver Free is a painting tool that can be used to create works of art from scratch, or edit and enhance your digital photos. The new release brings improved visibility of docked palettes, which makes the program easier to use, and virtual memory management is better too.



PRIVACY SWEEPER

PrivaZer 2.28

privazer.com

Min requirements: Windows

XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 7.2MB

PrivaZer is a PC and privacy cleaner designed to remove all references to everything vou've ever opened. watched, downloaded or deleted. The new release offers better support for various languages and improves the speed at which PrivaZer cleans the MFT (Master File Table).



SYSTEM TOOL

Glary Utilities 5.20

www.glarysoft.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 14.3MB

Glary Utilities is a collection of tools for fixing problems, optimising Windows and protecting your privacy. The new release improves the Tracks Eraser and Disk Cleaner, and adds an update option for drivers. It's also had some minor interface improvements and bug fixes.

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Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Create playlists of YouTube and SoundCloud songs

Ottawan - D.I.S.C.O. (1979)

YouTube lets you compile playlists of your favourite music videos, but you need to visit the site to listen to them, which isn't always convenient. The brilliant add-on PlayTheInternet (bit.ly/play367) solves this problem by grabbing songs and videos from YouTube, Vimeo and SoundCloud, so you can

play them from wherever you are on the web. To use the extension, click its toolbar button when visiting one of those sites to get a list of all the audio and video files

linked to on that page. Click a title to add it to your playlist to enjoy later. PlayTheInternet is packed with useful features, including the ability to share tracks and playlists; sync playlists across PCs; and shrink its browser-based interface to a tiny Desktop player that you can move around your screen. You can also pause, fast-forward and rewind tracks, adjust the volume and create as many playlists as you like.



Mark all links you've visited as 'read'

Some web pages usefully highlight any links you've opened by changing their colour from blue to purple, but not all sites do this. To avoid revisiting pages, install Mark All As Read (bit.ly/ mark367), which turns any links you've visited to purple when you click its toolbar button. Click it again to mark them as unread. One drawback to the extension is that when it marks links as read, it also adds them to your browsing history, which means you might need to clear out the folder more often. It works best on sites such as Reddit (www. reddit.com) that use long lists of links.



Hide promoted Twitter accounts and tweets

The CEO of Twitter recently said he'd like one in 20 tweets to be 'promoted', which is bad news if you're already tired of them cluttering your timeline.



Fortunately, it's easy to hide promoted tweets, trends and accounts by using the extension Remove Promotions for Twitter (bit.ly/promoted367). This prevents companies from pestering you with their marketing campaigns and provides a more lightweight and less extreme solution than using a full-blown ad blocker. Once installed, the add-on works quietly in the background so you won't even realise it's there. In fairness, Twitter does a good job of keeping promoted content unobtrusive, but you may still prefer to block it altogether.

Make Gmail messages more emotional

Gmail Emotional Labor (bit.ly/ gmail367) instantly injects some passion into your emails. Just write your message as usual and click the smiley face on your toolbar (not the one at the bottom of the message) to apply a touch of cheer. For example, an opening greeting of 'Hi' becomes:



"Hey lovey! I've been thinking of you". It isn't particularly clever, but it could help you fake some enthusiasm when you're flagging.

Give everyone on the web googly eyes

Googlifier (bit.ly/googlifier367) has nothing to do with Google, and everything to do with adding googly eyes to faces in online photos. Just click the toolbar button to 'googlify' people's peepers, and then save and share the image in the usual manner.



This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more

FIREFOX

Sync your pinned sites across

Firefox 36 lets you sync any websites you've pinned to your New Tab page across your devices, so you can easily access your favourite and most frequently visited sites on your PC, phone and tablet by clicking or tapping the relevant tile. To use the feature, ensure that your tabs are set to sync by going to



Options, Sync (via either the Tools or Settings menu) and ticking the Tabs box. To select a site to sync, open your New Tab page and click the pin icon in the top-left corner of its tile. If you haven't yet set up Firefox Sync, which also lets you sync bookmarks, passwords, add-ons and more, click the Tools menu, choose Setup Sync and follow the instructions.

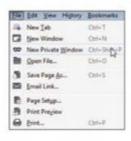
Manage your tabs' memory usage

The more tabs you have open, the more memory Firefox uses, which can cause the browser to crash. Tab Data (bit.ly/ tabdata367) helps to prevent this from happening by providing useful info about your tabs, including how many you have open and how much memory each one is using. The latter figure is displayed on the tab itself, so if a particular page is proving to be a resource hog, you can close it. There's also a handy 'Perform a garbage collection' option that frees up memory from greedy tabs.



Add icons to Firefox menu options

The introduction of curved tabs and the Chrome-style Settings menu has made Firefox look sleek and modern, but it's let down by the Menu Bar's dull, grey menus. To make these more interesting, install the add-on CuteMenus Classic Mod (bit.ly/cute367), which places icons



next to every option in all the main menus, from File and Edit to Tools and Help. As well as improving the design of

the browser, these icons give you a handy visual representation of what the browser's built-in options do: for example, a mask for New Private Window and a clock with a cross for Clear Recent History.

Change your cursor as vou scroll

Elegant Scrollbar Cursors (bit.ly/ elegant367) applies a subtle but effective design tweak to Firefox, which changes your mouse cursor according to its position on the scrollbar. Hover over the bar and it turns into a hand, and if you start scrolling, it becomes a bidirectional arrow. Move the cursor away from the scrollbar and it once again reverts to the traditional pointer.



OTHER BROWSERS

Download Vimeo videos in Opera

There are countless tools for grabbing videos from YouTube, but if you prefer the more professional and higher quality clips on Vimeo, you should install Vimeo Videos Downloader (bit.ly/vimeo367). Find a short film you'd like to download, click the TV icon in your address bar and click the SD or HD buttons for the standard or high-definition

The videos are saved as MP4 files, but you can easily convert them to

versions.



another format once you've downloaded them.

Translate words via the address bar

Omnibox Google Translate (bit.ly/omni367) is an Opera version of a Chrome extension (hence the 'omnibox' in its title) that translates foreign words and phrases directly from your address bar. To use the extension, first go into its options and, in the 'Default languages pair' section, select English from the second drop-down menu (leave the first set as 'Detect language'). Click your address bar and type two exclamation marks - !! followed by the word or phrase to translate. Press Enter to open Google Translate for the translation.





Best Free Apps

UPDATED

App of the Fortnight

BOOKS

Nook 4.0

bit.ly/nook367

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 7 Size: Varies with device

If you're looking for an alternative to Amazon's Kindle e-reader and ebook store, look no further. Barnes and



Noble's Nook for Android has received a major update, with a new design and lots of features including customisable shelves for your favourite books. The store offers an impressive catalogue of more than four million titles, which includes one million free books, along with magazines, newspapers and comics. Particularly useful is the new Nook Channels tool, which helps you to discover great books by making personal recommendations on a range of subjects.

For the first time, the app

offers a selection of interactive picture books for children, and because you can now set up multiple profiles, it's easier for the whole family to share the same device.

You can explore the titles on offer without having to sign up, but you'll need a Nook account before you can download even the free titles. Setting one up and registering a credit card also entitles you to a 14-day trial of a range of magazines

including National Geographic and People, and if you join before 30 March, you'll also be given a credit of \$5 (about £3.40) to add to your account.





Our rating

UPDATED

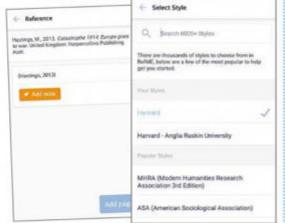
EDUCATION

RefME

bit.ly/refme367

Min requirements: Android 4.0, iOS 7 Size: 9.9MB

If you've ever had to write an academic essay, you'll know what a pain it can be to add references and compile a bibliography. RefME makes the whole process much easier by letting you scan book barcodes to generate



the citations automatically. If the barcode isn't recognised, you can search by the book's title, journal article or author; and if you need to cite a website, you can just enter its URL. More than 7,000 reference styles are supported, so you should have no trouble finding the right one for your institution. Once you've finished a project, the app lets you export your references via email or Evernote, and your reference lists will also be synced to RefME.com, where you can access your work or export it to Microsoft Word.



LIVE MUSIC

Dice

bit.ly/dice367

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 11.6MB

Run for music fans by music fans. Dice brings you tickets for the best live music events without charging any booking fees. All the gigs are handpicked and because the company



works directly with its featured artists, you can put your name on a waiting list if a concert sells out and Dice will do its best to get you in. You don't need to wait for the tickets to come in the post, either - just arrive at the event with the Dice app on your phone. Dice previously only offered tickets for live music in London, but it has now been expanded to cover Glasgow, Bristol and Manchester, too.

Our rating



Our rating

This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps

GAME

Deal or No Deal

bit.lv/deal367

Min requirements: Android 3

Size: 36MB

If you like playing along with Deal or No Deal at home, why not take on the banker on your phone or tablet with this new, fun quiz game? You'll be asked a series of questions before you can start opening any boxes, but the more questions you get right, the more lifelines you unlock. This lets you check whether a box is blue or red, and sometimes even take a peek inside. Questions cover a

range of categories including Film, Music and Science & Nature, and you can play as a single player or take on your Facebook friends. Although Noel's cheeky quips soon become tiresome, we really enjoyed testing this game and we managed to beat the banker!













Like SyncBackFree

yncBackPro

Windows Backup Software

- Cloud Support: Google Drive, Dropbox etc.
- Backup Windows, Apple OS X & Android
- Media Transfer Protocol Pictures/Music/Movies
- Copy Locked or Open Files
- Versioning Keep Previous Backups
- Scripting Support

NEW

Exclusive 10% discount Coupon! CPN05452741299

www.2BrightSparks.com

TOOL

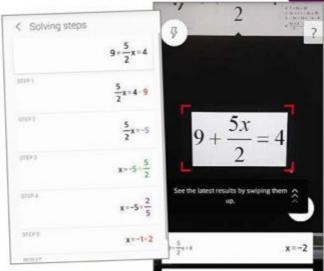
Photomath

bit.ly/photomath367

Min requirements: Android 4.1

Size: 4.2MB

New to Android, this brilliant app lets you solve mathematical problems by simply pointing your camera at them. What's more, Photomath shows you its calculations, step-by-step, so you can see how it got to the solution. The app supports basic



arithmetic, fractions, decimal numbers, linear equations and several functions including logarithms. According to its developers, "students can use it as a tool to learn [maths], while parents can use it to quickly check their kid's homework". We were really impressed with how simple Photomath was to use and the speed with which it found a solution to our problem. Although it doesn't recognise handwritten equations, support for this is coming soon. If you happen to find a complicated problem that Photomath can't solve, you can submit it to the app's developers so they can keep on improving it.



Our rating



ROUND UP | Quick bites

Job Mapper

bit.ly/jobmapper367

Min requirements: Android 4.0,

iOS 7.1

Size: 1.2MB

Job Mapper brings a fresh perspective to the way you look for jobs by letting you browse current vacancies on



a map. You don't have to sign up to search and share jobs, but you can only save your favourites if you register or log in with Facebook. Unfortunately the app kept crashing when we tried to review jobs we'd saved, so we hope this problem will be ironed out quickly.

We'd also like the option to browse the jobs in a conventional list view.



Best Free Apps

FITNESS

Runbit

bit.ly/runbit367

Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 7

Size: 4.6MB

Runbit turns dull, routine exercise into a fun activity by challenging you to collect as many virtual stars as possible. After pressing the yellow start button, the app uses GPS to show your position on a map and an arrow points you towards the closest star so



you don't lose your way. It might not be as fun as chasing stars in Super Mario, but if it's cold and wet outside, the app might just give you an extra incentive to don your trainers and start exploring new routes. Runbit keeps track of basic information such as time elapsed

and distance covered, so you'll know if you're reaching your targets. It also works alongside other fitness apps.



FOOTBALL

WhoScored

bit.ly/whoscored367

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 7.0MB

WhoScored.com is a football website that offers live scores, match reports and in-depth stats for hundreds of leagues and tournaments around the world. Now it's available as an app, providing loads of features including real-time goal notifications, match commentary and



in-play statistics. The Premier League, Championship and Champions League are all covered in detail, with live data and stats including pass success, shots on target, dribbles and interceptions. We particularly like WhoScored's live team and player ratings (which are based on

This splendid app teaches you to play the guitar by listening

more than 200 raw statistics) and its display of the best 11 players of the week, month and season based on the same algorithms.

Our rating



Our rating

NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

NEWS

Clips Video Editor

bit.ly/clips367

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 83.4MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases) This simple, easy-to-use video editor is free to download on iOS devices, but you'll need to buy the Pro Version (which costs £3.99) if you want to

remove its watermark.

bit.ly/source367

Source (News Reader)

Size: 4.8MB Price: £2.39

Min requirements: Android 4.3

Source pulls news articles from

services such as Feedly, Twitter lists,

Inoreader, RSS and The Old Reader, so that you don't have to constantly jump

between different apps on your phone



CREATIVE

Forge by Adonit

unlock unlimited play time.

bit.ly/forge367

Size: 190MB

Price: Free (with in-app

purchases)

Forge is designed to help you explore and

evolve your ideas through sketching. It's free, but if you want to work on multiple projects, you'll need to buy unlimited 'walls' for £2.99.



SCIENCE

Human Anatomy Atlas

bit.ly/human367

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 743MB

Human Anatomy Atlas claims to be the most anatomically accurate 3D atlas of the human body, with more than 4,600 structures in both the

0

Human Anatomy

or tablet. **MUSIC**

Yousician Guitar

bit.ly/yousician367

Min requirements: iOS 6 Size: 36.6MB Price: Free (with in-app purchases)



Clips Video Editor





Yousician Guitar

Forge by Adonit











to your performance and giving you instant feedback. It's free to download, but it'll cost £15 a month if you want to





It might be expensive and large, but male and female models.



Best New TV Apps

VIDEO

Vimeo

bit.ly/vimeoios367

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 66.6MB

There are lots of high-quality videos to watch on Vimeo and you can now enjoy them on the big screen by using the updated Vimeo app for iOS. This adds support for Google's Chromecast device, so you can stream videos from your iPhone or iPad to your telly. Just select a video, then tap the Chromecast icon in the app. You can keep using your iPhone or iPad while the video plays. Annoyingly, Vimeo hasn't yet added Chromecast streaming to its Android app, though it plans to do so "in future times". Meanwhile, you can install the unofficial free Chromecast for Vimeo Beta app from Google Play (bit.ly/ vimeoandroid367), which reportedly works very well.



FILM & TV

BT TV

tv.bt.com

Min requirements: BT subscription with

YouView or Vision+ box

Size: N/A



If you're a BT customer with a YouView or Vision+ box, you can kiss goodbye to your weekends following the addition of TV box sets to the ISP's downloads store. These include popular series such as Downton Abbey, Modern Family and The Walking Dead, and BT hopes to keep expanding its selection to compete with Sky and Virgin Media by striking deals with rights holders. Any shows you purchase can either be watched on your television or on your phone or tablet using the free BT TV app for Android and iOS. The cost of the programmes will be added to your monthly BT bill. BT TV also lets you download and watch Hollywood films including 12 Years a Slave and Captain

TV & FILM

Discover TV

bit.ly/discover367

Min requirements: Android 4.3,

iOS 7

Size: 1.5MB (Android)/24.3MB

There are so many digital TV channels and catch-up services that finding something to watch on telly can take a lot of flicking around. To help you jump straight to the good stuff, the Radio Times has launched Discover TV, which daily handpicks 10 TV shows and five free films. Each choice includes a Radio Times review and details of its broadcast time. Discover TV also chooses the best content available on catch-up and on-demand services including iPlayer, ITV Player, Netflix and Amazon Prime, and picks TV highlights for the coming week. Only the iOS app has full listings, though.



X Don't install...

Parker

bit.ly/parker367

An app that shows you available parking spaces nearby is a great addition to your phone or tablet, but Parker promises more



than it delivers. Although it claims to cover cities in both the UK and US, it's sadly lacking in data for either country and failed to find us a single space. Worst of all, it frequently crashes, which is no help when you're already stressed because you can't find anywhere to park!

...Install this instead

Parkopedia Parking

bit.ly/parkopedia367

Min requirements: Android (varies with

device), iOS 7 Size: 25MB

Avoid the frustration of trying to find a parking space by installing the brilliant Parkopedia Parking. This official app for the Parkopedia website (www.parkopedia .co.uk) covers more than 630 towns in 52 countries which, it claims, adds up to more than 38 million spaces. It detects where you are (or you can search for a location) to show you places to park on a map,

complete with their hourly rate. Tap a marker for more information, including the capacity, opening hours, distance and full details of prices. The app also provides photos and car park reviews, while an in-app purchase tells you how many spaces are available. Just don't use it while you're driving!







Mobile World Congress 2015



A host of exciting new devices were unveiled at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. David Crookes rounds up the best

SAMSUNG GALAXY S6 AND GALAXY S6 EDGE

www.samsung.com/uk/galaxys6

Why are they interesting?

Samsung is replacing its highend smartphone, the Galaxy S5, with the S6 and S6 Edge handsets. Both have beautiful styling, fingerprint sensors, wireless charging, front-facing 5-megapixel and rear-facing 16-megapixel cameras, and Samsung's own ultra-fast Exynos 7410 processor. The only significant difference between the two devices lies in the 5in Quad HD Super AMOLED display. While both phones have an impressive resolution of

2,560 x 1,440 pixels, the screen of the S6 Edge is curved to meet the back of the



Galaxy S6

phone. This means there are no bezels to the left and right of the screen, so it's easier to swipe and you can display extra information along the sides of the screen.

When are they out? 10 April.

How much will they

A 32GB S6 model is expected to cost around £500 with the S6 Edge priced from £600.

Do I really need one?

The S6 Edge takes phone design to



another level, but both handsets have dispensed with removable batteries, removable storage and waterproofing, which some users aren't happy about.

HUAWEI WATCH

consumer.huawei.com

Why is it interesting?

The hotly anticipated launch of Apple's Watch may be just around the corner but the Huawei Watch also attracted a lot of attention the MWC. Its fashion-conscious design combines a gorgeous coldforged stainless-steel frame with a circular 1.4in touchsensitive display, a scratchproof sapphire-crystal lens, a heart-rate monitor and 6-Axis motion sensors.

How much will it cost?

The price will vary depending on whether you

want the watch in gold. silver or black, and may start at around \$1,000 (£655).

When's it out?

Huawei hasn't revealed a UK launch date yet.

Do I really need it?

If you'd rather have an Android-compatible watch than an Apple one, then it could be a good option.

SONY XPERIA Z4

www.sonymobile.com

Why is it interesting?

Sony's slim, 10in lightweight Android tablet is a real bobby-dazzler thanks to its incredible 2,560 x 1,600-pixel display. The screen is 40 per cent brighter than the Xperia Z2 tablet and uses Sony's new Live Colour LED technology, which, Sony says, provides the deepest and most vibrant colours available on a mobile screen. Coupled with a superfast, 64-bit Octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 810 processor, this is a tablet that gives the Apple iPad Air 2 a run for its money. Another bonus is that it can play videos for 17 hours before it needs charging.



When's it out?

Deliveries are expected from 27 May.

How much will it cost?

The Z4 cost £499 with 32GB storage and Wi-Fi; You pay an extra £80 for 4G connectivity.

Do I really need it?

If you are ready for a tablet upgrade, the Z4 is worth a look, especially as it comes with a Bluetooth keyboard dock and a subscription to Office 365.

IKEA HOME SMART

www.ikea.com



Why is it interesting?

Wireless phone chargers have been around for a while, but they are often bulky plastic things that can look unsightly if you have them dotted around your home. Help is at hand from Swedish design giant Ikea's new Home Smart range, which consists of stylish items of furniture fitted with wireless charging spots for your mobile devices. As long as your phone or tablet uses the Qi charging standard, you can pop the device on a lamp, bedside table or coffee table to recharge it whenever you need.

When's it out?

Mid-April.

How much will it cost?

Prices will start from £30.

Do I really need it?

Home Smart furniture will prove useful if you have a Qi-enabled phone, such as the Galaxy S6 or S6 Edge (see review, opposite). If you don't, but you have an iPhone 4 or above, or one of the last three generations of Galaxy S phones, you'll need to pay extra for a charging cover. Still, it may be worth waiting before you replace your furniture with Home Smart because there is a competing wireless-charging system called PMA. The new Galaxy handsets support both standards but many other devices don't.

FORD E-BIKES

www.ford.com

Why are they interesting?

Ford's prototype MoDe:Me and MoDe:Pro foldable e-bikes could either revolutionise travel or become the modern equivalent of the Sinclair C5. Both bikes have a 200-Watt motor and nine-hour battery providing electric pedal assistance for speeds of up to 15.5mph, and rearfacing ultrasonic sensors to warn you of overtaking vehicles. The MoDe:Me is aimed at commuters while the MoDe:Pro is for couriers and the like.



When are they out?

The bikes are still at the experimental, prototype stage.

How much will they cost?

It is too early for details.

Do I really need one?

As cities become more congested, e-bikes could be a perfect, safer way to get to work.

......

HTC VIVE

www.htcvr.com

Why is it interesting?

The Oculus Rift, Samsung Gear VR and Sony's Project

Morpheus are all competing to be king of the virtual-reality headsets, but the HTC Vive is said to offer the

most realistic experience yet. Its innovative positional tracking is able to pinpoint the exact direction and tilt of your head and, as you walk around a room, it will warn

you if you're about to hit any obstacles.

When's it out?

Potentially, by the end of the year.

How much will it cost?

No firm details yet.

Do I really need it?

It's another entrant in a crowded future market, but HTC Vive looks very promising.

BLACKPHONE 2

silentcircle.com

Why is it interesting?

Mobile security is a major concern, especially after a vulnerability called Freak exposed Android and iPhone users to threats for many years. The Blackphone 2 stops phone calls and texts being tracked or hacked. It uses a modified Android operating system called PrivatOS that ensures apps and browsing are always encrypted or protected via a VPN. It also has a 5.5in screen and a 13-megapixel rear-facing camera.

When's it out?

June. A Blacktablet will be released later in the year, too.

How much will it cost?

Expect to pay around \$600 (£400). There are as yet no pricing details for the tablet.

Do I really need it?

If you're worried about phone security, the Blackphone 2 is a powerful solution.

ANDROID PAY

www.android.com

Why is it interesting?

Set to compete with Apple Pay and Samsung Pay, Android Pay isn't a new product for users but a platform for developers to build into their apps and systems. It uses near-field communication (NFC) for cashless payments and will eventually support biometric security measures such as fingerprint scanning, but it's not designed to replace the

Google Wallet payment system.

When's it out?

No confirmation as yet.

How much will it cost?

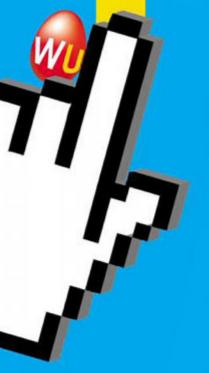
There will be no additional costs for using it.

Do I really need it?

Google is hoping Android Pay will become a standard payment method.



cheat he wen o Gersiji



The best online freebies sometimes require a little digging around and bending of the rules. Wayne Williams reveals 25 crafty tricks that let you get for free what other people pay for

Cheat the web to get stuff free



espite the old saying, the best things in life aren't free. In fact, they're usually pretty expensive. But thanks to the web, there are plenty of everyday products and services that you can get for nothing, provided you know where to look. We're not talking about meagre pickings such as a free miniature toothpaste sample, but proper freebies that websites tuck away and (sometimes deliberately) make difficult to find.

In this feature, we round up our favourite sneaky tricks for bagging online bargains, some of which involve a little subterfuge on your part but are all perfectly legal. We'll show you how to get multiple free audiobooks, enjoy free meals and drinks on your birthday, earn credit to spend at Google Play, get paid-for iOS apps for nothing and enjoy the benefits of O2 Priority Moments without being an O2 customer. All the cheats here worked at the time of writing.



Entertainment

Get free credit for Amazon purchases

Amazon claims that more than half of its customers are now members of its Prime subscription service (amazon. co.uk/prime), which for £79 a year gives you free one-day delivery, access to the Kindle Lending Library and unlimited streaming of more than 15,000 movies and TV episodes. Many new Prime users



get as much as they can from the service and then cancel before the end of the 30-day free trial, but there's another

sneaky trick you can try. When you order a Prime-eligible item that you don't need in a hurry, select the Free No-Rush (three-five business days) delivery option at the checkout to get £1 of 'digital video, Kindle book and digital music' credit to spend elsewhere at the store. That might not sound like much, but if you split a large order into individual items, you'll get offered the £1 credit every time. Considering that most Amazon MP3s cost 99p or less, and there are thousands of ebooks for the same price, you'll soon build up a collection of digital freebies.

If you signed up for Prime without realising that it costs £79 a year after the trial, see our boxout 'How to get a refund from Amazon Prime' on page 43.

Grab free credit to spend at Google Play

Google Play (play.google.com) is home to a massive selection of Android apps, music, TV shows and movies. There are plenty of freebies to be found there, but if you want to download something that costs money, PayPal will currently give you £3 to spend on anything you like. Just go to bit.ly/paypal367, click 'Save the offer' and sign in with your PayPal details, or sign up for an account if you don't already have one. Then go to

Get free audiobooks through friends

Audible (www.audible. co.uk) is home to more than 100,000 audiobooks and costs £7.99 a month. However, there's a 30-day free trial available for new customers, which gives you one free book to listen to. Sign up, choose your free book, and then cancel the service to avoid being charged. If one free book

isn't enough for you, Audible also runs a Refer-a-Friend programme. Get a friend to sign up to try the service at bit.ly/audiblefriend367 and you'll get a free book credit. You can invite



multiple friends, up to a maximum of three a month so if you know enough people who are willing to join Audible, you can earn up to three free audiobooks a month.



Google Play to claim £3 off any purchase. Download the PayPal Android app and you can spend the credit at participating high-street stores. The offer ends on 1 April, so get in quick!

Download paid-for mobile apps for free

Apple offers one paid-for app for free every week through its App Store – when we visited, this was Printer Pro, which usually costs £4.99. The easiest way to find out what the 'Free App of the Week' is and when it's available is to follow the App Store on Twitter @AppStore.

IGN (uk.ign.com) gives away one free game for the iPhone and iPad every month. Just go to the website and click the app you want to get a free promotional code. Past giveaways



include Mass Effect: Infiltrator, Ridge Racer Slipstream and The Walking Dead: Season 2.

Not to be outdone by Apple, Amazon gives away a paid-for app every day through its Appstore. This is aimed primarily at Kindle Fire users, but you can get the freebie on any Android



device by installing the Amazon Appstore app (bit.ly/amazonapp367). It's no longer available on Google Play so you'll need to go to Settings, Security on your phone or tablet and allow installation of apps from unknown sources.

Get free books for your Kindle

There are plenty of free Kindle books available to download, but it's not always easy to find good ones. To save yourself wading through the thousands of free titles on offer, you can use eReaderIQ (uk.ereaderiq.com/freebies) and Book Basset (www.bookbasset .com) to discover the best recent freebies. Amazon itself has a page listing the top 100 free Kindle publications (bit.ly/kindle367). You might not be familiar with many of the authors, but at the time of writing there are free titles available from the likes of Jodi Picoult. Emily Brontë. F Scott Fitzgerald and Charles Dickens. Project Gutenberg is also a great source of classic, out-ofcopyright books and offers them in various digital formats.



Cheat iTunes by checking Amazon Music

If you've bought CDs or vinyl from Amazon in the last 15 years, you automatically get free digital versions of all the songs on them, via the store's AutoRip service. You don't have to do anything to claim these tracks - Amazon handles everything automatically - but you might not even realise they're there. Just go to Amazon Music (bit.lv/ amazonmusic367) and browse the tracks that have been added to your library. You get digital tracks from all eligible CDs or records you've bought, including those purchased as a gift for someone else. Even if you prefer to buy tracks from iTunes, it's worth checking which songs you already have for free at Amazon.



Download free songs from YouTube

If there's a song you like on YouTube, you can either watch the video over and over in your browser, or you can use a tool such as the free Freemake YouTube to MP3 Boom (bit.ly/ freemakeyoutube 367) to save the audio to your computer in MP3 format. The YouTube MP3 website (www.youtube-

Super Tuesdays (www.myvue.com/ supertuesday), which give you a third off the price of your ticket. Cineworld also offers discounted tickets on Bargain Tuesdays (www.cineworld. co.uk/bargain-tuesdays), which can save you over a fiver.





mp3.org) offers a quicker way to do the same thing, without installing any software. Just paste in the video URL and click Convert Video.

Earn Play credits for sharing your views

Google Opinion Rewards lets you earn credits to buy apps, music, movies, games and books from the Google Play



Store. All you have to do is download the free Android app (bit.ly/ googleop367) and then answer some very short, anonymous surveys. You won't earn a huge amount

because surveys typically only go out once a week and the most you can expect to receive for your answers is \$1 in Play credits, but it will only take seconds of your time.

Make a free Netflix trial last longer

Netflix (www.netflix.com) lets you try its TV-and-movie-streaming service for free for 30 days, during which time you can cancel your membership with a few clicks and at no charge. Register again using another email address (you can use the same card details or PayPal account) to start your 30 days all over again and avoid paying the £5.99 (or more) monthly subscription fee. That gives you enough time to watch all available series of popular shows such as House of Cards and Breaking Bad. Obviously, this trick won't work if you sign up to Netflix through Facebook, so make sure you choose the email option on the registration page.



Save money on cinema tickets

With the price of tickets constantly increasing, a trip to the cinema has become very expensive, especially once you factor in the cost of snacks and drinks. ShowFilmFirst (www

.showfilmfirst.com) gives you free

tickets to preview screenings. To enjoy a free night at the flicks, just register your details and wait for the movie invites to come through. This is doubly cool because you get to see movies before your friends without paying a thing.

The two-for-one deals of Orange Wednesdays are no more, but Vue cinemas now offers

Cheat the web to get stuff free





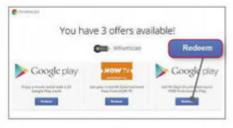
*Technology

Unlock hidden offers with your Chromecast

Google's Chromecast is a great little piece of technology that lets you stream videos, music and other content directly to your TV set. The HDMI dongle only costs £30 and Google sweetens the deal further by rewarding Chromecast users with regular special offers.

All you have to do is visit the Chromecast offers page (bit.ly/ chromecast367) in Chrome (with the Google Cast add-on installed) and connect to your Chromecast. Alternatively, you can open the Chromecast app on your Android or iOS device, open the main menu and choose 'Check for Offers'. See what deals are available and click or tap Redeem to claim them.

Current offers include £5 of Google Play credit for a movie rental; a threemonth free trial of Sky's Now TV Entertainment Pass, which usually costs £6.99 a month; and 90 days of unlimited free music streaming from Google Play, saving you £9.99 month. Just remember to cancel before the free trials end.



Earn Bing Rewards in the UK

Bing Rewards (www.bing.com/explore/ rewards) is a frequent-flyer-style loyalty scheme in which you earn credits by searching the web using Microsoft's search engine.

You can use these credits to buy popular gift cards, or to donate to charity. The downside is that Rewards is currently only available to US users. Although you can change your location in Bing to say you're based in America, the search engine will detect your real IP address and block you from joining the rewards program. However, if you use a free VPN program such as



Get a free SIM card on any network

You can buy SIM cards from numerous online stores for a few quid, but it's much wiser and cheaper to request one directly from a mobile network provider, which will happily send you one for free. Go to a provider's site, such as EE (bit.ly/eesim367), O2 (bit. ly/o2sim367), Three (bit. ly/3sim367) or Vodafone (freesim.vodafone.co.uk), and choose the type of SIM (standard, Micro or Nano) and pay-as-you-go option you want.

As well as giving you a free card, network providers occasionally run special deals. For example, Three recently offered a free SIM with

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> 500MB of data preloaded to use abroad, and EE gave away £5 free credit to anyone who texted them a code. Follow a mobile network's Twitter account to get alerted to new deals.

Cyberghost (www.cyberghostvpn.com) or a browser add-on such as Hola (hola .org), you'll be able to cheat the system and start earning credit, as long as you remember to fire up the VPN each time you search for something. Unfortunately, you won't be able to claim some of the rewards because they are only redeemable in the US, but it's certainly worth a look.

Make free phone calls over Wi-Fi

Most people know that you can use Skype and other VoIP services to make free and cheap calls from your PC, but there also apps that let you call for free from iPhone or Android devices. This saves you being charged by your phone network and, if you use Wi-Fi, it won't eat into your data allowance, either. Skype might be the best known service, but there are plenty of excellent free alternatives to consider, including Google Hangouts (www.google.com/



Hangouts), Viber (www.viber.com), WePhone (www.wephoneapp.com) and ooVoo (www.oovoo.com). All of these apps are free to use, but offer in-app purchases so you can place free calls to landlines and mobiles, as well as to other mobile devices.

Phone 0800 numbers from your mobile for free

Although it's free to call an 0800 number from your landline, calling from your mobile can cost anything between 7p and 20p a minute. Thankfully, Ofcom has (finally) stepped in to stop this practice, and from June all 0800 numbers will be free when you call from your mobile.

In the meantime, you can still cheat your way to free 0800, 0808 and 0500 calls using the service 0800 Buster (www.0800buster.co.uk). Just dial 0333 555 8800, enter the freephone number when prompted, then press the hash key (#).



Products

Get 02 Priority Moments if you're not an O2 customer

O2 Priority Moments (www.o2.co.uk/ apps/priority) has some fantastic freebies on offer, such as (at the time of writing) a year's free subscription to Evernote Premium and a free coffee at Caffè Nero. There are also regular discounts on tickets, offers and experiences. If you're on another mobile network, you can enjoy Priority Moments without switching by ordering a free Pay & Go SIM card from O2 (www .o2.co.uk/freesim). Insert the SIM into any unlocked smartphone, activate it for free, connect to your Wi-Fi and download the Priority Moments app for Android, iOS or BlackBerry. Use this SIM every time you want to check for new Priority Moments deals or freebies.



Avoid paying delivery fees on eBay

An increasing number of eBay sellers are now offering Click & Collect as a

Find the best photo-print freebies

Most photo-processing services offer free prints to new customers, and you can sign up with as many sites as you like to stack up your prints. To save time, use MoneySavingExpert's Photo Print Finder (bit.ly/ photoprint367) to see what offers are available. By default, the tool searches for 100 free or discounted photos, but you can adjust the search criteria to suit your needs and set the print size and paper type you're looking for.





delivery option, which means you can get your items for free and don't have to wait at home for the postman. Currently, you can pick up your package from more than 650 Argos stores across the UK, so if you want to save money, you can filter eBay's search results to show only listings with that option available. To do this, just select the Free Click & Collect box on the left-hand side of the page, along with Free P&P if you like, to avoid paying delivery charges.

Get Office 365 for free

Microsoft is keen to push its Office software to students and teachers, so

it's offering Office 365 free to anyone studying or working in a qualifying school (academic institutions that have purchased Office for faculty and staff). If you have a child or a grandchild who is eligible - check online at bit.ly/ officestudent367 - they'll be able to install the software on up to five PCs or Macs as well as Office apps on mobile devices. Students are not allowed to share the plan with others, but if they install the suite on the family laptop, then anyone on that PC can use it.





Use 'split ticketing' for cheaper train journeys

Here's a strange fact - buying two tickets for different parts of your journey might be cheaper than buying one ticket for the full trip. You don't need to change trains, and you might not even need to move from your seat. MoneySavingExpert's Tickety Split tool (bit.ly/tickety367) helps you work out where you should split the ticket. Enter the journey you're planning, and details such as whether you have a railcard or not, then choose a time. The



tool will try to split the tickets for you. Once you've calculated the cheapest route(s), book your ticket online at a site such as Redspottedhanky.com or TheTrainline.com.

Go sailing for free

Don't own a yacht and can't afford to hire one? That's okay because there are plenty of boat owners out there looking for temporary crew members of all levels of experience. You might be expected to pay a small daily amount (say £15) towards meals and the like, but that's all. Take a look at CrewSeekers



(www.crewseekers.net), Findacrew (www.findacrew.net) and Crewbay (www.crewbay.com) to see who's setting sail and when.

Get a free taxi ride from Uber

Uber is an alternative taxi service that's grabbing both good and bad headlines at the moment, and is available in a



growing number of cities and countries. Sign up to the service at bit.ly/uber367 using the code LFS15 and you'll get £15 free credit that you can use on a journey around London or Manchester. If that code stops working, you should be able to find others on sites such as Latest Free Stuff (www.latestfreestuff .co.uk) or MyVoucherCodes (www .myvouchercodes.co.uk/uber).

Cheat the web to get stuff free





Food & Drink

Become a secret diner to get free meals

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch, but if you sign up as a secret diner at ProductTesting.uk.com (bit.ly/ secretdiners367), you can enjoy free meals at restaurants including Pizza Express, Nando's, Yo Sushi, TGI Fridays, Jamie's Italian and Wagamama. Product testers are chosen at random and you'll be sent vouchers to use at the selected restaurant. Naturally, there's a catch but it's a reasonable one: you'll need to tell the site about your dining experience afterwards, including the quality of the food, the service and the atmosphere.



Get free birthday treats from restaurants

Ed's Easy Diner is a chain of Americanstyle Fifties diners found throughout the UK. Join the free Ed's Club and you get



NEXT ISSUE

a loyalty card and emails alerting you to special offers at the restaurant. More importantly, when you sign up you'll receive a voucher for a free regular burger and, as a bonus, you'll also get a free Ed's Shake on your birthday. Sign up at www.edseasydiner.com/eds-club.



PizzaExpress also rewards people who sign up to its mailing list with a special birthday surprise. The website

(bit.ly/pizza367) doesn't mention exactly what gift you can expect, but according to Twitter and other sources, it's a bottle of Prosecco (sorry if we spoiled the surprise).

Get a free meal from your local

If you fancy going for a birthday meal at your local pub and it happens to be a Shepherd Neame establishment, sign up to the birthday club (bit.ly/

shepherd367) to get a free main course when the big day rolls around. Brewers Fayre's Bonus Club will also give you a free meal on your birthday (www .brewersfayrebonusclub.co.uk).



HOW TO GET A REFUND FROM AMAZON PRIME

Amazon was recently censured by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) for encouraging customers to sign up for a free trial of its Prime service, without clearly warning that they'd be charged the annual subscription fee of £79 if they failed to cancel after 30 days. If you were one of the many people to miss the tiny text reading "Paid subscription starts automatically after free trial unless cancelled", there's a chance you could get a refund. Amazon's terms and conditions (bit.ly/prime367) state that "you can cancel your membership at any time before you or your registered guests have made any eligible purchases or taken advantage of the Amazon Prime benefits and we will refund your full membership fee". So provided you haven't ordered anything with Prime's one-day delivery, watched a film or TV show on Prime Instant Video or used one of the other benefits, you can get your £79 back. To do this, sign into Amazon, go to Your Account and click Manage Prime Membership. On the left-hand side of your account page, click End Membership. Then, on the next page, confirm you want to cancel to claim your refund.





on sale Wednesday 8 April 2015

Hack Windows restrictions

Unlock hidden settings to make your PC work the way you want it to

OFIND FILES FASTER

We test the best free Windows search tools

CUPGRADE ANDROID What to do before and

after you get Lollipop **OFREE MUSIC FOREVER**

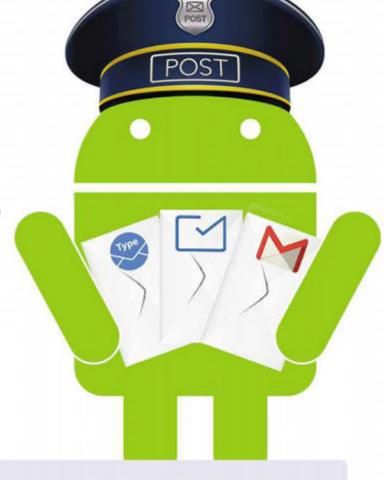
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Free **Android** email apps

Pre-installed email apps on Android devices often leave a lot to be desired. Edward Munn looks at six of the best free alternatives



Type Mail | bit.ly/type367 | ★★★★★

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked

WebUser

Type Mail, formerly known as Blue Mail, is the best Android email app we tested, offering an attractive design and support

for IMAP, Exchange and POP3 accounts. What sets it apart from its competitors is that it turns your inbox into a to-do list, so you can mark each email as 'done' or set a reminder to look at it again at a more convenient time. These actions can be performed quickly and easily by swiping emails to the right from the list view; you swipe left to archive or delete messages (or mark them as unread).

Type Mail also gives you the biggest choice over how you receive emails, offering 'push' and 'fetch' delivery for all accounts, as well as letting you refresh your inbox manually. You can also customise your notifications for each account, with options to choose a sound alert and a colour for your LED light to blink when when you receive a new email. If you're worried

these distractions might disrupt your

sleep if you get a message in the middle

Gmail ŧ Inbox (739) - All Updated 15:58 53m LivingSocial Deals £29.99 Adidas Trainers | Estée Lauder Eye • Cream | £23 Elle Macpherson Dry Brush | : 56m me 1 1h **Excel with Business** 90% Off ALL courses | St Patrick's Day Offer - This email newsletter was sent to 1h Rollersnakes Extra 10% off the Entire Site - Price Smash! - View this email in your browser : 2h Accidents happen. We'll get you back in 0 the saddle. - Hi Wiggle Accidents ŧ 4h Brooklyn Bowl London ON SALE: Chop And Quench: The Felal 0 000

> of the night, you can use the app's Do Not Disturb feature to specify times when you'd like to silence each account.

We really liked the app's top menu, which lets you quickly switch between

accounts or choose a 'Unified' view, as well as letting you filter Unread and Starred emails, or those marked for your attention. Type Mail also has our favourite widget of all the apps in this test, providing you with a scrollable inbox, a 'compose mail' shortcut and an 'unread' count on your home screen.

By default, the app adds 'Sent from Type Mail' to the end of your emails, but you can easily delete this and create your own custom signature using Rich Text Format and images.

How it can be improved

There was very little that we could find fault with in Type Mail, but its interface is slightly more convoluted than some of its competitors. If we could borrow one feature from the other apps, it would be Mailwise's email grouping, which would provide extra help with keeping your inbox tidy.

......

OUR VERDICT

Type Mail offered the best combination of features and performance of all the email apps we tested. If you want to manage multiple email accounts from one app, this is a great place to start.

Android email apps

Mailwise | bit.ly/mailwise367 | ★★★★☆

FEATURES **** PERFORMANCE **** EASE OF USE ****

What we liked

Mailwise's minimalist interface and range of unique features made it a strong

contender for our Gold Award. We particularly liked its Smart Grouping feature, which collects all recent emails from a particular contact together to keep your inbox less

cluttered. For example, all our promotional emails from Groupon were gathered into one entry called 'Updates from Groupon Goods'.

The app also uses a handy 'conversation view' to display emails, making it easier to see an overview of your correspondence. Like our Gold Award winner, Mailwise lets you perform actions using swipe gestures: a single swipe left archives an email, while a swipe right gives you a range of other options including deleting it or moving it. The app supports IMAP and Microsoft



Exchange, making it ideal for personal or work email, and we really like that it displays a different coloured icon in your notification bar according to which account has received a new message.

How it can be improved

Our biggest gripe with Mailwise is that its primary search bar doesn't search emails stored on the server. This meant having

to perform a search twice if the email we were looking for wasn't downloaded to our device. The app also lacks push email delivery for IMAP accounts.

.......

OUR VERDICT

Mailwise has a great interface and some fantastic features that we didn't find in any of the other apps. Its clunky search function was all that stopped it winning our Gold Award.

BEST OF THE REST

CloudMagic

bit.ly/cloud367

CloudMagic only narrowly missed out on receiving an award. It

supports IMAP, POP3 and Microsoft Exchange, and its clear, simple interface make it a pleasure to use. However, it had fewer features compared to some of the other apps in this test. We'd like to see the option to



save draft emails included, and its widget could be improved by letting you view your emails from the home screen.

Aqua Mail

bit.ly/aqua367

Aqua Mail is compatible with all

popular webmail services and also supports Microsoft Exchange, but we found its interface the trickiest to use of all the apps we tested. There are loads of settings to customise the way the app works, but you'll need to buy the Pro version for



£3.16 if you want to add more than two email accounts or delete the default Aqua Mail signature.

myMail

bit.ly/mymail367

This colourful and easy-to-use app

is compatible with IMAP, POP3 and Exchange mailboxes. Despite offering push notifications, swipe gestures and customisable signatures, myMail doesn't have as many useful features as our award winners.



Setting up accounts was quick and simple, but changing their settings or deleting them proved to be impossible, leaving us with no option but to uninstall the app.

Gmail | bit.ly/gmailapp367 | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUse BRONZE WARD

What we liked

When Gmail introduced support for IMAP, POP3 and Exchange email accounts

last year, it made a strong case for being the only email app you would ever need on your Android device. If Gmail is your primary email account, then this app certainly gives you the best user

experience available. It immediately looks and feels familiar, splitting your Gmail inbox into the three default categories (Primary, Social and Promotional) and mimicking the conversation-style layout from the webmail service.

Your last 30 days of emails are automatically synced, meaning you can browse plenty of messages offline and, unlike its rivals, the app's search function managed to display even our oldest correspondence. Adding another



email account is quick and easy and switching between them can be achieved with a single tap in the app's sidebar. Its Material Design makes it the most attractive app we tested, as well as one of the most straightforward to use.

How it can be improved

For third-party email accounts, Gmail offers fewer features than our

Gold and Silver Award winners. Also, the app only supports Exchange on Lollipop devices, so we were unable to access our work emails.

OUR VERDICT

Beautifully designed and easy to use, Gmail is great if you use Google's webmail service as your primary email account. Otherwise, there are better options available.

Never run out of storage

It's easy to get more free online space for your files and folders. Rob Beattie goes in search of extra gigabytes from the main cloud services



Dropbox

www.dropbox.com

What you get: All new Dropbox users get 2GB of storage for free, which

you can access from almost anywhere on pretty much any device including Windows and Linux PCs, Macs, iOS, Android and even Blackberry devices. There's no support for Windows Phone, but that's said to be coming soon.

Dropbox has no file-size limits (beyond your maximum 2GB capacity); offers speedy and reliable synchronisation; and is very easy to use. Although 2GB is a relatively meagre amount of space by today's standards, Dropbox is rightly one of the most popular free online storage services around.

How to get more: Referring a friend to Dropbox gets you an extra 500MB up to a maximum if 16GB. Other ways to boost your capacity include sharing folders via Facebook (125MB), installing the Carousel photo gallery (3GB), using the company's Mailbox to manage your email (1GB) and completing various Twitter-



related promotional tasks (125MB each). Even watching the Getting Started tour gets you an extra 250MB.

Maximum free storage: 23GB



OneDrive generously gives all users 15GB of free space (the maximum file size is 10GB), which works with any PC running Windows Vista, 7 or 8 onwards, and any mobile device running Android, iOS or Windows Phone, provided you're signed into your Microsoft account. It's got many of the same sharing and syncing features as Dropbox, but they need more configuring if you want to access your stuff when you're not online. OneDrive is seamlessly integrated with Windows 8+ and means you don't have to think about where your files are actually stored.

Microsoft has previously offered online storage under various names - SkyDrive, Windows Live SkyDrive, Windows Live Folders and so on - so you may already be signed up to an old version without realising it.

How to get more: Set your mobile device's camera app to automatically back up photos onto OneDrive and you'll get an extra 3GB. You can also refer up



to 10 friends at 500MB a pop for a maximum boost of 5GB. Microsoft recently ran an offer that gave you 100GB of OneDrive space for free as a reward for switching from Dropbox. The promotion is now over, but it's worth keeping an eye on preview.onedrive.com for future offers.

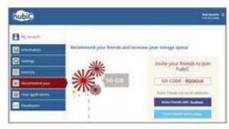
Maximum free storage: 23GB



gives you a mighty 25GB of storage for free, which can be accessed from any computer or mobile device. You can either use your free space for back-ups or to synchronise files and folders across different devices. The interface is a little basic, but there are no restrictions on file size and Hubic can handle any file type.

How to get more: Hubic has the most lucrative referral system of all online storage services. If you recommend a friend, you both get an extra 5GB of space when they sign up. However, Hubic seems to have got its sums wrong because it claims this will get you 2.5TB of storage when in fact the five-friend limit makes a total of 50GB.

Maximum free storage: 50GB



Free online storage



GET EVEN MORE STORAGE

Look around and you'll find plenty of services offering free online storage Here are three of the most generous

Flickr

www.flickr.com

Hats off to Flickr, the popular photo-sharing service, for offering 1TB free storage as standard. That's



enough for around half a million images at a decent resolution.

Mega

www.mega.co.nz

Characterised by some as a 'shadowy cyberlocker' because of its colourful owner Kim Dotcom, Mega offers 50GB of free storage to anyone who signs up for a free account.

Ozibox

www.ozibox.com

This self-styled 'community Cloud' eventually hopes to make all its storage plans available for free. Currently, the free offering gives you 100GB of storage for back-up, sharing and syncing.

allow you to increase your free storage.

occasionally run extravagant promotions

However, Box has been known to

(up to 50GB for life), so it's worth

keeping your ear to the ground.

Maximum free storage: 10GB

notional file-size limit of 5TB but certain formats are restricted to much smaller sizes - for example, 100MB for a Google Slides presentation. You should also remember that your storage is shared across all the company's services, including Gmail and Google+.

How to get more: There's no way to routinely add more storage to Google Drive for free, but the company offers regular promotions and incentives. For example, to celebrate Safer Internet Day earlier this year, Google offered 2GB of extra Drive space to anyone who took its Security Checkup (bit.ly/security367). Additionally, when you buy a Chromebook or HTC One (M8), you get a massive 100GB of bonus storage.

Maximum free storage: 15G

Google

0 ****



COMBINE YOUR CLOUD STORAGE

Wouldn't it be useful if you could somehow aggregate the free storage you've amassed so you could use it from a single app or website? Well, now you can. Both Jolicloud (www.jolicloud.com) and Multcloud (www.multcloud.com) act like file browsers for a range of different online storage providers

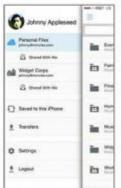
including Dropbox, Google Drive, Box and OneDrive so you can search, copy and paste.



rename, delete, and drag and drop files between folders; Multcloud even lets you move stuff between different services for free, while Jolicloud offers this as part of its €5 (£3.55) per-month paid-for plan.

What you get: Copy gives you 15GB of free storage with no maximum file-size

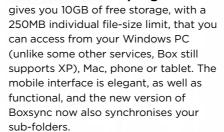
limit, which you can use from any Windows or Linux-based PC, a Mac or



any mobile device running iOS, Android or Windows Phone. As well as the usual sharing and syncing features, Copy creates elegant photo galleries for your pictures and we especially like how easy the mobile apps are to use.

How to get more: Using Copy's referral scheme, you can invite up to five people to join the service. If they sign up, you both get an extra 5GB of storage. Maximum free storage: 40GB

Box www.box.com What you get: Box



How to get more: Like Google Drive, there are no ongoing incentives that



Google Drive www.google.com/drive

What you get: Anyone with a Google account gets 15GB of storage

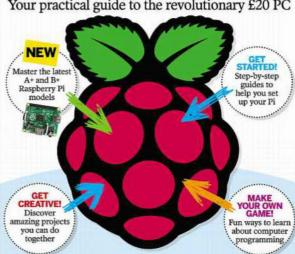
straight away in which you can store all the stuff associated with your Google apps, such as documents, spreadsheets, photos, PDFs and other files. The web-based interface has a pleasingly flat, modern look, although it feels a little clunky to use. However, the mobile versions are much better. There's a

WebUser Bookstore

NEW!

Updated for 2015

Your practical guide to the revolutionary £20 PC



RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+), helping children learn the coding skills needed to excel at the new school curriculum. We take you step by step through the basics of setting up and configuring the Pi and introduce many fun projects for families.

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Inside the 164-page The Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools, we lift the lid on Google's most popular tools to reveal more than 430 ways to make them even more efficient, useful and tailored to your



needs. These include clever new add-ons for Chrome, amazing free apps for Android and stunning sights in Google Maps.

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO **ANDROID**

Inside this 148-page book you'll find all the free apps, expert tips and easy-to-follow Workshops you need to get the most out of your phone or tablet. You'll find buying advice, including reviews of the



latest tablets and phones, and everything you need to know about taking your first steps with your new device.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON

at bit.ly/defandroid

(cheaper than in the shops!)



Google's best new Easter eggs



Google loves hiding fun surprises in its websites and software. **Robert Irvine** unlocks the best new Easter eggs in tools you use every day

Uncover the secret game in Lollipop

Every version of Android since Gingerbread (2.3) contains a surprise that's relevant to its name. Lollipop (5.0) is no exception and it's Google's best mobile Easter egg yet, because you can play it rather than just stare at it in amusement. Go to Settings, then tap 'About phone', 'About tablet' or 'About device'. Keep tapping 'Android version' until a lollipop appears, then long-press this to unlock a customised version of the game Flappy Bird, in which you guide the Android logo between giant lollipops. It's tricky but very addictive!



Unlock Google's Cheat mode with your voice

The Konami code has delivered more Easter eggs than the Easter Bunny, and now conceals a surprise in Google's Voice Search feature. On the Google homepage (if www.google.co.uk doesn't work, try www.google.com/ncr), click



the microphone icon to launch Voice Search and speak the Konami code out loud: "up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A". You

should hear the reply: "Cheat mode unlocked: Unlimited free Google searches", which doesn't actually do anything but sounds impressive.

Other Voice Search tricks to try

include asking Google: "Who are you?", telling it to: "Beam me up, Scotty" and saying: "tea, Earl Grey, hot", but we won't spoil the surprise responses.
These tricks should also work in Voice Search on your Android phone or tablet.

Discover Chrome's offline dinosaur game



Recent versions of Chrome include an Easter egg for when you lose your web connection. You can access this when you go

offline on your PC or Android device by clicking or tapping the dinosaur that appears above the 'Unable to connect to the internet' message. This will launch a game in which you help the dinosaur jump over cacti by pressing the Space bar or tapping your screen. The longer the dinosaur runs for, the faster he gets and the more points you score.

Try new modes of transport in Google Maps

As well as providing directions for driving, walking and cycling, Google Maps has some quirkier ways to get you from A to B. For example, if you search for a route between Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, then click the Transit button, you'll see the option to

get there by Royal Carriage. If you'd prefer to travel by water, look up directions from Magdalene College to Mathematical



Bridge in Cambridge; or from Magdalen College to Wolfson College in Oxford, for a Punt option. Sadly the option to fly from Snowdon to the Brecon Beacons by dragon, which had the web aflutter last year, has been removed.

Try web-design tricks in Google search

Here are a two slightly geeky tricks that may amuse anyone familiar with HTML: type marquee tag into Google and the figure showing the number of search results will scroll across the page, just as text does when it's placed in marquee tags. Type blink tag and all matches for the term in your search results will start blinking.



WATCH OUT FOR APRIL FOOLS' DAY HOAXES

Google is renowned for playing creative April Fools' Day jokes on its users, including last year's announcement of AdBirds, a new way to display adverts by using birds. You can find a full list of its hoaxes on Wikipedia at bit.ly/hoaxes367. Bear in mind, though, that Google sometimes uses 1 April to launch real tools, as it did with Gmail in 2004.



Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: Broadband	£3.50 (12 months FREE)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	○○ unlimited	£0.00
2		EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	co unlimited ∗∗	£30.00
3	c plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	○○ unlimited	£30.00
4	sky	Sky: Broadband & Calls	£7.50 (12 months HALF PRICE)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	○ unlimited	£45.00
5	TalkTalk	TalkTalk Fibre Broadband	£13.50 (6 months FREE)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	○ unlimited	£81.00
6	Virgin (S)	Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£17.50 (12 months HALF PRICE)	18 months	50Mbps max speed	unlimited	£105.00
7	c) plusnet	Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£14.99 (£3.75 for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	○○ unlimited	£112.44
8	sky	Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£20.00 (12 months HALF PRICE)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£120.00
9	E	EE: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£19.95 (£9.95 for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	○○ unlimited	£179.40
10	media	Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£30.00 (£24.50 for 12 months)	18 months	152Mbps max speed	wnlimited	£294.00

Call 0800 083 2357 or visit www.broadbandgenie.co.uk/webuser

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

*First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost.

** Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 10 March 2015.



Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service



Take a Screen Break

Technology moves so quickly that it's easy to forget the big web stories from only a few years ago. This issue's quiz asks you to think back to 2001



Which groundbreaking audio device, launched in October 2001, was initially only compatible with Macs?

The biggest software launch of 2001 was undoubtedly Windows XP. But which Microsoft operating system did it replace?

Which of these was not a 3 codename for Windows XP during its development: Whistler, Romeo, Neptune or Odyssey?

Code Red hit the tech headlines worldwide in 2001. What type of program was it?

5 In 2001, Microsoft launched the Xbox to take on Sony's PlayStation 2, But what was the name of the games console launched by Nintendo?

What controversial file-sharing service was forced to close its network in July 2001, after being served with an injunction?

Which website launched on 15 January 2001 and is still very popular today?

Nokia ruled the mobile phone market in 2001, and launched the first handset to offer a built-in camera and multimedia

messaging (pictured, below left). But what was its model number?

9 What percentage of UK households were online in July 2001, according to an Oftel survey?

10 And what was the UK's most popular ISP at the time, with more than two million customers?

Which other computer 1 manufacturer merged with HP in September 2001?

What's the name of the two-wheeled 'personal transporter' (pictured) that was introduced in



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE POPULAR WEBSITES FROM 2001?







Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz367

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4 KitSound Pocket Hive Speaker

KitSound's wireless Pocket Hive speaker uses Bluetooth and NFC technology to pair with most popular smartphones and tablets, including all recent iPhones and iPads, and Samsung Galaxy and Google Nexus

devices. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@ dennis.co.uk with 'hive' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.kitsound.co.uk, 'like' KitSound's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/KitSoundUK) and follow KitSound on Twitter (@KitSoundUK).



WIN 1 OF 8

Lexar JumpDrive M20 flash drives

The Lexar JumpDrive M20 Mobile flash drive is a 2-in-1 micro-USB and USB 3.0 drive that works with Android tablets and phones enabled with On-The-Go. You can easily swap your photos, videos and files between devices, no matter where you are. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis .co.uk with 'lexar' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.lexar.com, 'like'

Lexar's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/LexarMedia) and follow Lexar on Twitter (@LexarMemory).



Practical WebUser

17 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

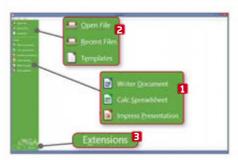
Use LibreOffice's new tools | www.libreoffice.org

The Document Foundation's free office suite has been updated with an improved interface and new features. Here's what you need to know

s good as Microsoft Office is, its Home and Student edition is restricted to a single PC, while Office 365 requires that you sign-up to an annual subscription.

LibreOffice is an excellent free alternative that's evolved from the same code as the OpenOffice suite. It comprises six applications: Writer (word

processor); Calc (spreadsheet); Impress (presentation and slideshow creator); Draw (vector drawing program for creating diagrams and flow charts); Base (database); and Math (editor for mathematical equations). It's now been redesigned with several useful new features that make working with documents and spreadsheets even easier.



You can launch any of LibreOffice's modules through the Start menu, or open LibreOffice's own program menu and choose an option from the sidebar. You can also open a file, browse recently saved files and explore the available templates. 2 Extensions 3 lets you add extra tools to the software.



Writer, the word processor, is the main component of LibreOffice. If you've used it before, you'll see the interface has been given a makeover. There's a menu at the top, 11 with toolbars and buttons below. 2 On the right is a sidebar for its properties, styles and gallery. B

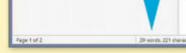


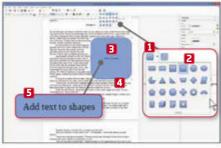
TOOLBARS

The Standard and Formatting toolbars have been reorganised with frequently used features replacing less commonly accessed commands

IMPROVED

The status bar is now much easier to read. This is where you'll find word counts, document positions and other details





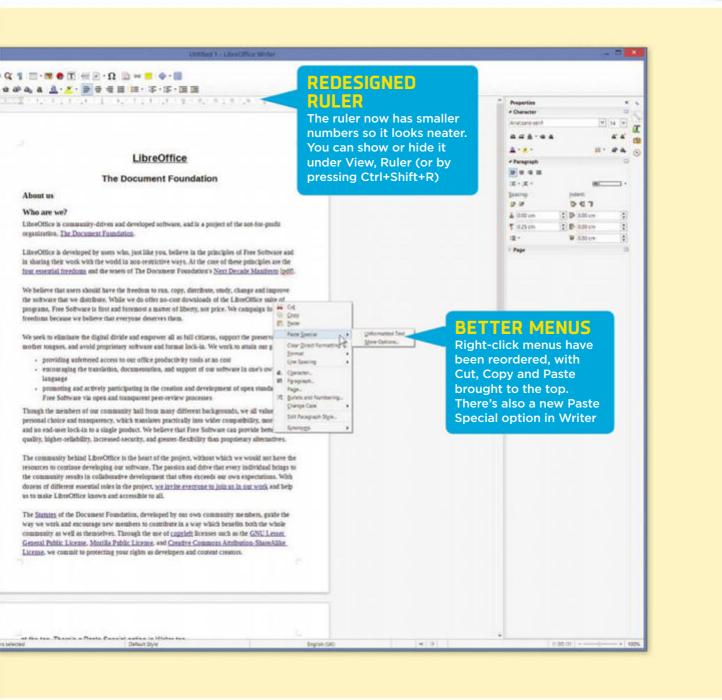
While it's been possible to add coloured shapes to documents for a while, LibreOffice now lets you add text to the shapes. Click the Basic Shapes button, 11 choose a shape 22 and draw it on to your document. B Make the corners rounded, if you like. 4 Doubleclick the shape to add your text. 5

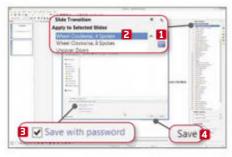


The Track Changes tool has new buttons and icons, 💶 which you can select from View, Toolbars, Changes. The commands to accept and reject changes 2 jump to the next change automatically, so it's easy to work through a document with lots of alterations. This is especially useful if you collaborate on documents.



Document styling has been streamlined in the new release, so if you're pleased with a change you've made to a paragraph style, title or heading, you can quickly apply the same change to any other part of the document. Click the down arrow next to a style 11 to edit or update it.





Impress now supports OpenGL (hardware-accelerated) transitions. Click the Slide Transitions button in the sidebar 11 to choose a type. 2 Slideshows can be password protected to prevent tampering. Go to File, Save As and tick 'Save with password'. B Click Save 4 and enter the password twice.



LibreOffice lets you add audio and video files to your documents and play them using the built-in media player. Go to Insert, Media, 'Audio or Video' and browse for a file. Click the media icon 11 and a player will appear below. 2 Version 4.4 supports a wide range of additional media types.



You can customise LibreOffice through the Options menu. Go to Tools, Options. Enter your information under User Data. 11 Use Memory 21 to manage the number of 'undo' steps and set LibreOffice to load at Windows start up. You can configure the word processor under LibreOffice Writer. 3



Check for and remove Superfish, and similar risks

Badfish: bit.ly/badfish367 | 🕒 10 mins | 🎥 Any version of Windows

f you own a Lenovo computer, you may already have encountered Superfish, a program that the computer manufacturer pre-installed on its PCs until it was found to be a security risk in February. Even if you don't have a Lenovo PC, you might have unknowingly installed software that uses the same underlying technology, probably as a PUP (Potentially Unwanted Program) that came bundled with legitimate software.

Researchers such as Filippo Valdorsa (bit.ly/filippo367) have pointed the finger at Komodia (www.komodia.com), which created the framework these programs are based upon. This Komodia software changes Windows' security certificates so it can replace the adverts displayed on your computer, even on supposedly secure sites (with https-prefix addresses) such as shops and banks, with ads from its own sources. It has since been fixed, but vulnerable versions may still be lurking on your PC. You should check that these programs aren't running on your computer and, if they are, remove them. We'll show you how in this Workshop.

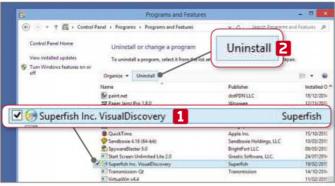




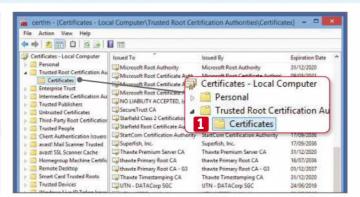
The suspect programs use altered security certificates, which can be detected if they are installed on a PC. Go to bit.ly/badfish367 and wait for the web page to run its checks. Hopefully, you'll get an all-clear message. 11



If it turns out you have Superfish on a Lenovo PC, download the company's removal tool from bit.ly/ super367 and click 'Analyze and Remove Superfish Now'. 1 To check it's been removed, use the manual steps below



If you don't have Superfish on your PC, but find a similar program, or you want to be sure that Superfish is gone, go to the Control Panel and click 'Uninstall a program'. Look for the suspect program in the list (in this case, Superfish), 1 then highlight it and click Uninstall.



You also need to remove any problematic security certificates. Press Windows+R, type certlm.msc into the box and press Enter. Find the Trusted Root Certification Authorities entry on the left, then click the arrow to show the Certificates folder. 1

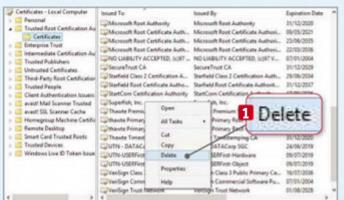




EXPERT TIP

Andy Shaw says

How To Geek (bit.ly/howto367) has published a list of programs that use the Komodia technology. Search your certificates for these keywords (see Step 10, below): Privdog, Sendori, Purelead, Rocket Tab, Superfish, Lookthisup, Pando, Wajam, WajaNEnhance, LLC', CE UmbrellaCert, DO NOT TRUSTFiddler_root, 'System Alerts, LLC'. Any that appear should be checked for problems.



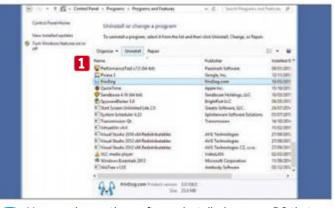
To remove the certificate, right-click it and choose Delete. 1 Confirm that you want to delete it by clicking the Yes button when asked. Restart your computer to make sure the changes have taken place.



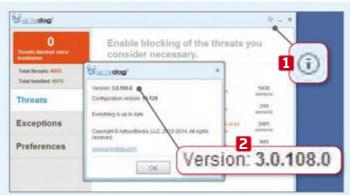
Mozilla's Firefox browser and Thunderbird email program keep their own lists of certificates, so they need to be cleaned separately. In Firefox, click the menu button, 1 select Options 2 and click the Advanced tab. 5 Select the Certificates tab 4 and click the View Certificates button. 5



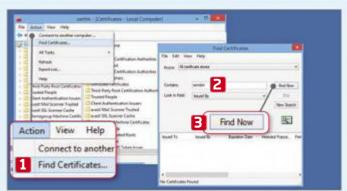
Scroll down to the Superfish section and click the Superfish certificate to highlight it. 11 Click the 'Delete or Distrust' button 2 and confirm that you want to delete it. Now do the same thing in Thunderbird, if you have it installed.



You may have other software installed on your PC that has changed your certificates and could leave you at risk. Check your installed software for anything that looks like the list of programs in our Expert Tip, above. 🗓



If you find a suspect program, you can uninstall it if you no longer want it. However, some of these programs have since been fixed so they might now be safe. For example, the problematic version of PrivDog was 3.0.96.0. Run the software and click the 'i' link 🗓 to see its version number. 🔁



When you remove a program, ensure the certificate has also gone. Relaunch certlm (Windows+R, and type certlm). Click Action, Find Certificates, 11 type the program into the Contains box, 2 then click Find Now. 3 Also check for the other names listed in our Expert Tip.



100 Windows tweaks in one program

he Windows Tweaker is a well-designed, easy-to-use program that offers a wide range of one-click Windows hacks. It's compatible with all versions of Windows from Vista onwards and you can use it to perform a range of handy

functions such as setting Windows Explorer to restore your previous session and scheduling a shutdown for a specific time in the future. Here are our favourites.

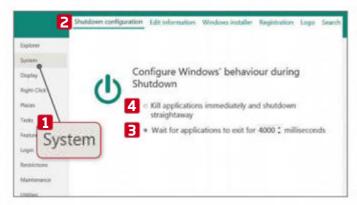




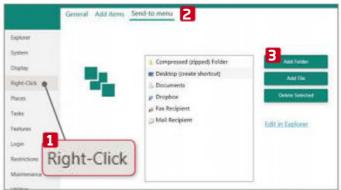
Download and run Windows Tweaker. If you want Windows Explorer to remember your previous Explorer session, click the Advanced tab 💶 and select 'Restore previously opened folders at log in'. 2 Click 'Start screen' 3 to view a range of options relating to Windows 8's Start menu.



You can set Windows 8 to go straight to the Desktop on start-up. 1 There are also options to automatically show lacksquare the Apps screen when you click Start lacksquare and to list Desktop apps first in this view when your apps are sorted by category.



When you shut down your PC, it waits for running applications to close. Click System 🗓 and, under 'Shutdown configuration', 2 you can set the length of this delay 🖪 or choose to 'Kill applications immediately and shutdown straightaway'. 4



Select Right-Click. 1 On the General tab, you can set the Control Panel to appear in the Desktop's right-click menu. If you frequently send files to the same location, click 'Send-to menu' and Add Folder to add a new directory to Windows' send-to dialogue.



If you prefer to run security scans and other tasks after you've gone to bed, you can set your PC to shut down automatically. Click Tasks, 11 choose a date and time 2 from the 'Schedule shutdown' tab and click Schedule. 3 You can cancel this by clicking Cancel Scheduled Action. 4



It's important that you remember to click Save in Windows Tweaker 💶 to store any changes you've made. You'll usually need to restart your PC before they'll take effect. For a range of handy shortcuts to Windows' system, disk and network tools, click Utilities. 2

Don't wait for 'if' with IFTTT's new Do buttons

FTTT (If This Then That) has launched Do, a new service that adds trigger buttons to Android and iOS devices, so you can run its tools without waiting for a specific event (the 'If' bit) to happen. These

buttons can be used to create useful shortcuts to your favourite online services that are even faster than launching their associated apps. There are three apps available: Do Button, Do Camera and Do Note.



IFTTT: ifttt.com | 🕒 10 mins | 🖷 Android, 🏴 iOS





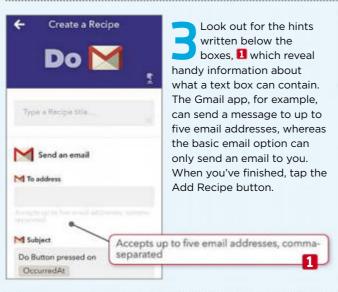




You can keep up to three recipes in each app. Swipe left or right after opening IFTTT to switch between them, or click the pestle and mortar icon to view them all. To add a new recipe, tap the plus icon, 11 or edit or delete an existing one by tapping its pencil symbol. 2 You can browse through IFTTT's collections or create your own by clicking the plus icon again.



Fill in the form for your chosen recipe. The options will vary depending on the service you've chosen, but most let you add your own text. 1 You can also use 'ingredients' (such as the time the recipe is run or the name of an appended photo) in any of the text boxes by tapping the flask icon. 2





IFTTT's standard camera tool is useful for backing up every photo you take, but you might not necessarily want to share every picture on Flickr and Facebook. Do Camera is great for selective sharing because you only need use it when you have a decent shot that you're happy to share. Click the plus icon to make a new recipe and configure the service you want to use. 1



When you use Do Camera, your device's camera is activated and you can take a photo by pressing the round button. 1 If you'd rather use an existing photo, tap the thumbnail of your last snap. 2 This brings up your recent photos and you can choose which one you want to send.





Do Note lets you email yourself a message; 💶 add a task to your to-do list; 2 create calendar events; B make notes in online services such as Evernote; and save items such as Tweets for later. Most options will interpret natural language, so if you type 'Meet John tomorrow at 9pm' into the Google Calendar tool, it'll create the appropriate appointment.

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance





Upgrade your PC to boost its gaming potential

Wayne Williams guides you through the hardware you need to turn your computer into the ultimate games machine



Get a new graphics card

The easiest way to boost your PC's gaming performance is to install a new, more powerful graphics card. These are available from numerous manufacturers, but they all use hardware produced by either Nvidia (GeForce) or AMD (Radeon). Before you buy, it's worth using a site such as Tom's Hardware (www.tomshardware.com) to find out which card best suits your needs and

budget. Prices vary, but essentially you get what you pay for, and a really powerful graphics card could set you back a few hundred pounds.

You'll also need to check what type of socket your motherboard is equipped with (it's probably PCI-Express) so the card you buy is compatible. Some PCs have more than one socket, which means you can have two graphics cards running side-by-side. While this will provide

spectacular graphics performance, it will also cost twice as much.

If that kind of spending is beyond your budget, consider the Nvidia-powered MSI GT 730 Low Profile graphics card, which Scan sells for just under £50 (bit.ly/ msinv367). If you can afford more, then the Sapphire AMD Radeon R9 280 Dual-X OC GDDR5 is a good all-rounder. Overclockers sells it for £156 (bit.ly/ sapp367). The Gigabyte GTX 970 G1



Gaming Nvidia (bit.ly/giga367) is another excellent choice, but it will set you back £310. But if money is truly no object and you want the absolute best, then go for the MSI Radeon R9 295 X2 8192MB GDDR5 (bit.ly/msirad367), which costs a heart-stopping £690.

more power your card will have

For help installing a new graphics card, see our Mini Workshop, below.

Boost your memory

The more memory you have installed, the better your PC's performance, although the amount of memory you can install will depend on your processor type and Windows version. If your PC is a few years old, it will probably take DDR3



RAM. If it's newer, then it may have DDR4. You can find a good selection of high-performance memory modules at Crucial (bit.ly/crucial367) and Corsair (www.corsair.com). Kingston recently launched HyperX Fury DDR4 RAM (bit.ly/fury367), which automatically recognises its host platform and overclocks itself to the highest published frequency. It's not cheap, though: 32GB (in a 4 x 8GB configuration) costs around £390.

Take control of your games

There's a wide selection of controllers on offer, including gaming-specific keyboards, mice, joypads and joysticks. The type of controller you need will depend on the kind of games you play. If you're into multi-player first-person shooters, then you'll need a quality keyboard and mouse (and a mouse mat designed to reduce friction). Roccat





(www.roccat.org), Razer (www .razerzone.com), and Logitech (gaming .logitech.com) all offer a good selection of gaming peripherals. Logitech's new G303 Daedalus Apex Performance Edition Gaming Mouse (£55) promises exceptional tracking and maximum responsiveness. The sensor can be tuned to match the properties of your mouse mat's surface, and its programmable RGB lighting looks very cool.

You could pair it with Logitech's new G910 Orion Spark RGB Mechanical Gaming Keyboard, which costs £159 and also offers RGB illumination. Logitech claims it's the "world's fastest mechanical gaming keyboard".



MINI WORKSHOP | Install a new graphics card



Most modern graphics cards are quite big, so make sure you have plenty of room inside your PC's case. This might mean you have to temporarily disconnect some cables and possibly relocate your hard drives. The first and most important thing to do is to connect power to the card, using the supplied Molex-to-six-pin adapters. 🚹



Insert the card into a spare PCI-Express slot and push down hard so the locking clip pops into place, securing the card into position. Screw the card into the chassis 11 to prevent movement, then connect your monitors. This card comes with outputs for DVI, HDMI, DisplayPort and VGA.



Turn on your PC. When Windows starts, install the supplied software including drivers. This card comes with AMD Catalyst Control, which lets you add and manage preset configurations, 1 access common display tasks 2 and configure the settings for displaying video 3 and games. 4 You can overclock the card under Performance, AMD OverDrive. 5



Increase the power

Adding power-hungry components, such as one or more graphics cards, might mean you need a new PSU (Power Supply Unit). A 650W model might suffice, but it's best to get a 750W+ PSU. You can work out your system's needs using the eXtreme Power Supply Calculator Lite (bit.ly/powercalc367). Overclockers UK (www.overclockers.co.uk) has a good selection of PSUs.

Keeping it cool

The more high-performance components you add to the inside of your PC, the hotter it will get, and heat is the enemy of electrical components. You should consider adding some additional fans to whip away the heat building up inside your computer's case, especially if you have two graphics cards. Alternatively, you could consider watercooling your PC (bit.ly/watercool367). Although this method is very efficient and it's easy enough to install a sealed unit, a watercooled system is more expensive, makes more noise, requires greater maintenance and takes up more room than a fan.

Get the best monitor

You might not think that a new monitor will do much to improve your gaming, but you'd be surprised. A bigger full-HD or Ultra HD (4K) screen will make games look better and more immersive, but a high refresh rate and equally speedy response time will make everything appear much smoother, too. AOC (aoc-europe.com) offers a large selection of cutting-edge monitors specifically for gamers, including the 24in G2460PQU, which costs £216, and the 27in G2770PQU, which is around £288.



A good-quality monitor can help you see more of a game and make your vour reaction times faster

BUY A READY-MADE GAMING PC





Both PC Specialist and Chillblast offer ready-made and fully customisable gaming PCs

While it might be cheaper to upgrade an existing PC with new hardware, buying a complete gaming rig makes a lot of sense because you'll be getting a device that's built purely with performance in mind. PC Specialist (www.pcspecialist.co.uk) offers a good selection, and we particularly like the Vortex 1500 Gaming PC (bit.lv/ vortex367), priced from £1,500.

Chillblast (www.chillblast.com) also offers an excellent selection of gaming PCs. Our favourites are the Chillblast Fusion Quasar Haswell PC (bit.ly/ fusionquasar367), which costs from £599.99, and the Chillblast Fusion Slipstream Z97 Haswell Gaming PC (bit.ly/fusionslipstream367), priced

from £739. Both Chillblast systems are cheaper to buy ready-made than it would cost to separately purchase their components, and the company also offers a multi-award-winning warranty package that covers your PC for five years.

Both PC Specialist and Chillblast let you customise any of their PCs. You can change the case, components, drives, operating systems and more. You can also design your own gaming PC from scratch, based on your needs and budget, which is fantastic if you know exactly what you want (or close enough, at least) but can't face the effort of having to put all the bits together yourself.



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NEXT ISSUE

How To... Control your home appliances when you're out







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Web User's Top Tips

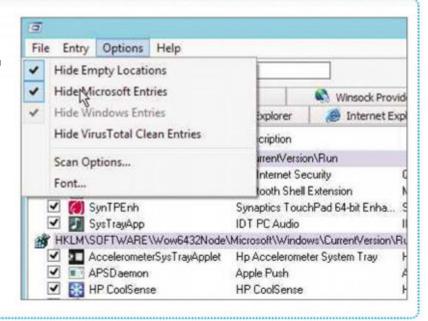
Autoruns is a sophisticated free tool to help sort out your start-up. Our expert explores the latest version

TOP TIPS FOR A FASTER START-UP

Hide the clutter

utoruns (bit.ly/runs367) lists everything that loads when Windows starts, which is a bewilderingly long inventory of programs, drivers, services and other items. To strip away any unnecessary and confusing clutter, go to the Options menu and hide Windows, Microsoft and empty locations. This filters out essential items that you shouldn't tamper with and unimportant stuff that can be ignored. Alternatively, disregard the Everything tab because it contains far too much information and use the other tabs to see shorter lists of relevant start-up items. Click the Refresh toolbar button after changing the options.

Hide start-up items that are essential to Windows or belong to Microsoft



Disable start-up items

Autoruns lets you modify the list of programs that start with Windows, and disable or delete entries. Clear an item's tick box to stop it launching on the next boot-up. If you're thinking of deleting an item, disable it first, then restart and use your PC several times to ensure that the item won't be missed. If you find that your PC needs the item to operate properly, click the tick box to enable it again and restart Windows. If you're happy to remove the item, right-click its entry and select Delete. It's a very simple system – the hard part is figuring out what can be disabled.

What to look for

Many start-up items have names that mean very little to most people, which

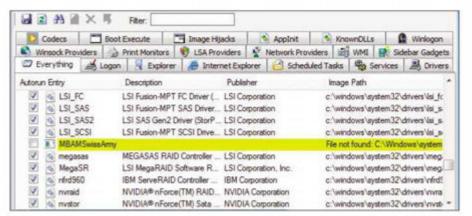
If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

makes it difficult to work out whether they are essential or optional, malware or adware. The way to deal with lots of obscure entries is to look down the Publisher column for companies that you either don't know or don't trust. Entries for your PC's manufacturer, Intel, Nvidia, AMD and a few others are all related to the hardware and are essential, so ignore them. Trusted software companies such as Google, Apple, your anti-virus software supplier and others can also be skipped. When looking for programs in the start-up list

that you can disable, keep an eye out for entries from companies you have never heard of or those without names or descriptions. Looking up and checking every entry on a long list may seem overwhelming, but once you've followed these steps you'll be left with just a few items that are suspicious and need researching.

Red and yellow warnings

As you browse the start-up items on the tabs in Autoruns, you may see some entries highlighted in red. While



Look for highlighted items. Yellow indicates files that cannot be found

red normally indicates danger, this is not necessarily true in Autoruns where it indicates that an item does not have a company name or description. This could be because the developer simply didn't bother to include it when creating the program, driver or service; but it may equally be because the developer, perhaps a malware author, is trying to hide something. Just don't jump to the conclusion that red items are malware and should therefore be immediately disabled, because this may not be the case.

Yellow is used to highlight start-up entries that point to a file that cannot be found. This situation can occur when software is uninstalled and the uninstaller fails to remove its start-up entries. Clear the tick against yellow start-up items to prevent Windows from wasting time searching the drive for files that no longer exist.

Use VirusTotal

VirusTotal (www.virustotal.com) is a website that can be used to check whether a file is malware or not. You upload the file to the site and, after it's scanned by over 50 different anti-virus products, the results are displayed. This facility is built into the latest version of Autoruns, which lets you right-click a start-up item and select Check VirusTotal from the menu.



Right-click an item to check it for malware with VirusTotal

The result is shown in the VirusTotal column (make the window bigger if you can't see it) and displayed as a ratio, such as 0/56. This means that 56 scanners were used and 0 reported that the file was malware. That's obviously the best case result; worst case would be 56/56, where 56 out of 56 anti-virus programs report it as malware. Getting results of 1/56 or 2/56 could be due to false positives, so they are rarely worth worrying about.

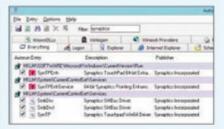
The result in the VirusTotal column is a blue underlined hyperlink and clicking it opens a browser showing the results page. You can see which anti-virus programs were used and the scan result from each one.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Filter Autoruns results

The entries for a particular program or company won't be neatly grouped under one tab or listed together, but are more likely to be scattered across several tabs or buried among the long list of items on the Everything tab. To only display the items you are interested in, select the Everything tab and enter the program or company name in the Filter box in the toolbar. The filter facility has been improved in the latest version of Autoruns and is useful for removing distracting entries, so you can focus on what is important.



Enter a keyword in the filter box to view only the items you are interested in

Compare start-up lists

Autoruns has a brilliant feature that lets you see what changes are made to your PC's start-up items when a program is installed or uninstalled.

To see this in action, start Autoruns and, when it's finished scanning and has displayed all the start-up entries, click File, Save. Name the file and save it to the Documents folder.

Quit Autoruns, install some software on your PC, then run the new program at least once to make sure it has made all the changes that it is going to make. Now quit the program, start Autoruns, select File, Compare, and select the file you saved earlier. Entries highlighted in green are additions made by the

Compare scans before and after installing software to see the differences

newly installed software; red ones are items that have been deleted. This shows you exactly what installing the software has changed.

Sometimes a program has a 'Start with Windows' option in its settings that can be turned on or off. If it doesn't, you can go to the Autoruns start-up list and clear the tick against

You can check the effects of uninstalling software in the same way as you did when installing it; use the Save facility in Autoruns before and after to see what changes have been made. In this case, however, you want to check that every item related to the software has been removed, because some programs are guilty of leaving behind start-up items when they are uninstalled. Comparing the scan before and after, and using the filter box to list start-up items relating to the company or program you've uninstalled, will help you clean up any left-overs.

Research with Google

When a suspicious start-up item is found and you don't know whether it is safe, research it online to see if anything turns up. Right-click a start-up entry and select 'Search online' from the menu to open your browser and search for its name in Google. The results are sometimes full of technical jargon, but you probably aren't the first person to ever look up the item, so just visit the links and see what other people are saying. It's usually quickly apparent when an item is adware or malware, but if little or nothing interesting is returned by your search, you can assume that the program is safe and can be left alone.

Alternative to Autoruns

No other tool is as good at analysing Windows start-up items as Autoruns, but it is worth taking a look at Starter (bit.ly/start367), which was designed for XP and Vista, but still works in Windows 7 and 8. It isn't as powerful as Autoruns, but it's better than the basic Windows System Configuration tool (which you can get to by pressing Windows+R and typing msconfig then Enter).

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



The fault could be with the drive or the disc. The CD may be scratched

prevent it from being read or written to.

most of them don't read correctly, then

it is a drive problem. Try burning several

CD-Rs or CD-RWs of different brands. If they all exhibit the same problem, this

When a CD/DVD drive starts playing

up, the only solution is to get a new one.

£12. If you can't remove the old drive, or

doesn't involve opening the computer,

If you have a desktop PC, it should be

easy to access and remove the old

you'd prefer a simple solution that

get an external USB drive. Budget

drive. A new one can cost as little as

also indicates a drive problem.

Try reading several CDs to make sure that it's not just one faulty disc. If all or

and even a greasy fingerprint can

GENERAL PC

Changing the default printer

My HP Envy 110 printer can print wirelessly, but I have it connected to my computer via USB and only use the wired option. However, as soon as I've printed something, the printer switches to the wireless setting. This means I have to change it back to the wired option every time I want to print. Can you explain why this keeps happening?

Marcia Boseley, via email

The printer requires two drivers, one wired and one wireless. Sometimes, when installing the software for a printer, both drivers install at the same time and appear as two separate printers in 'Devices and Printers' in the Control Panel. One of them has a green tick next to the icon,



Right-click the printer you use the most and set it as the default

which indicates that it is the wired default option (the one that's automatically selected when you print). In your case, the wrong one is set as the default. Right-click the printer and select 'Set as default

models are available from £20.

Recovering corrupt photos I have about 40 photos on my laptop that I am unable to view. I used to be able to double-click the file to view them with no problems. Then one day, they simply wouldn't open. Adobe Photoshop Elements 4, which I always used before, now displays the message: "Could not complete your request because JPEG marker segment length is too short (the file may be truncated or incomplete)". What's even stranger is that I have over 100 other photos in the same folder that work fine.

I have ignored this problem for a long time, but I am now organising my photos and would like to actually see what I have and whether they are worth keeping. I am using a Dell Inspiron laptop with Windows 7. It is regularly checked with Norton Security and I have performed several full system checks with no problems reported. How do I recover these pictures?

Andy, via email

Drive errors can cause problems for just one file, so having 100 unaffected photos in the same folder doesn't mean anything. Checking your hard drive is quick and easy, and you

SECURITY

Plagued by a PUP

My default browser is Firefox, but on two recent occasions it was suddenly replaced by SearchAssist.net. A scan with Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www .malwarebytes.org) showed it to be a PUP (Potentially Unwanted Program). I managed to delete it with some effort, but I wondered how dangerous this PUP is? I am always careful to open only sites that are shown as safe by Norton and WOT (www.mywot.com). I would appreciate your advice.

Ted Berry, via email



Use Malwarebytes Anti-Malware to detect and remove PUPs

SearchAssist.net is a search engine that can be used as an alternative to Google and Bing. The first few links in its search results are adverts, which is probably how it makes money, but it's not malware, so your anti-virus software won't block it, and it's not installed by visiting the SearchAssist.net website or any other site.

What's probably happened is that you've installed free software that was bundled with components, such as a browser toolbar, search engine and homepage settings. PUPs are harmless, but many people find them irritating, especially if they've been installed on a PC without the user realising.

HARDWARE

CD drive not working

My PC's CD drive doesn't seem to be working properly. It doesn't read CDs correctly and, if I try to add more files to a rewritable CD, it shows a message saying that it's read-only.

Joe De Souza, via email

should do this whenever you suspect there is a problem. Open an Explorer window and select Computer on the left. Right-click the drive (such as C:) and select Properties on the menu.

State Central Dit Sent |

Check your hard drive for errors and fix them automatically

Select the Tools tab and click 'Check now' in the 'Errorcheckina' section. The option to 'Automatically fix file system errors' is ticked by default, but the other option ('Scan for and attempt

recovery of

bad sectors') is not, because it isn't often needed. However, if you have a few hours to spare, tick that too. Click Start, click 'Schedule disk check', then restart Windows.

This won't repair corrupt photos, but you should check the drive anyway, then try a free photo repair and recovery tool, such as File Repair (filerepair1.com) or JPEGsnoop (bit.ly/ jpeg367). Free trials of Picture Doctor (bit.ly/picdoc367) and JPEG Recovery (bit.ly/jpegrec367) show whether a photo is recoverable before you buy them. However, the images may be beyond recovery and there's no guarantee that these tools can fix them.

INTERNET

Skype requests Microsoft account

I have had a Skype account for years, long before the service became part of Microsoft, and it worked fine. Now, when I connect to Skype with my Windows 8.1 desktop PC, a pop-up sometimes appears requesting that I enter my Microsoft account details to proceed. I neither have nor want a Microsoft account. Is there any way to stop these requests?

Nigel Smith, via email

A Microsoft account is just a username and password; no payment information is required and you don't need to buy anything. What it does is let you use free services such as Skype for making internet calls; OneDrive for storing files online; Outlook for managing extra email accounts; and online Office web apps including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and

OneNote. There are lots of free apps you can download from the Windows Store, too. Go ahead and sign up; there's nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

GENERAL PC

Printer not spooling

My elderly but hitherto extremely reliable Dell Inspiron 9300, which runs Windows XP Pro, has suddenly developed a problem. It will not run the print spooler, which has resulted in a total inability to print. Typing net start spooler brings up a window stating that the print spooler is starting, and it appears to be running when I look at it in Properties from the 'Printers and Faxes' section. However, any attempt to print a document produces nothing or, occasionally, just the first few lines, and then the 'Printer and Faxes' folder shows "Unable to connect"

My default printer is Wi-Fi connected and prints correctly from other PCs, as do my other hard-wired printers. Apart from replacing the PC, which is not an option since this would force a change to the totally unacceptable Windows 8, what do you suggest?

Neil Bone, via email

Windows can get in a muddle after installing several printer drivers and you have probably had a few over the years. Starting the Print Spooler service often helps, but in your case it hasn't, so more drastic measures are required.

Here is how to clear out all the printer drivers for a fresh start. Switch on the PC and press F8 a couple of times to access the start-up menu, then select Safe Mode from the list of options. When the Desktop appears, open an Explorer window, go to:

C:\Windows\System32\Spool\Printers and delete all the files it contains. Then go to:

C:\Windows\System32\Spool\ Drivers\w32x86

and delete all the files in there, too. Click Start, Run and type regedit to open the Registry Editor. Export your Registry from the File menu, in case anything goes wrong. Go to the following key in the left-hand pane:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\ CurrentControlSet\Control\Print\ Environments\Windows NT x86

Expand it and delete all the subkeys it contains except 'Drivers and Print Processors'. Next, go to:

HKEY LOCAL MACHINE\SYSTEM\ CurrentControlSet\Control\Print\

and delete all keys apart from BJ Language Monitor, Local Port, PJL Language Monitor, Standard TCP/IP Port and USB Monitor. Quit the Registry Editor, disconnect any printers and restart the computer in normal mode. Once you've reinstalled the printer driver, you should be able to print.

RADIO

BBC radio has disappeared

BBC radio stations no longer use the Windows Media format and I can't now pick them up on my Tangent Quattro internet radio. How do I retune the radio to get them back?

Ken Moore, via email

You can read about the BBC's changes to its radio streaming services on its Internet Blog (bit .ly/bbcrad367). Support for Windows Media has now stopped, which isn't a problem if you're listening via a mobile app or browser, but it may have an effect on internet radios.

Some internet radios have provided a firmware update to tune into the BBC. To check for updates on the Tangent Quattro, press the Select button and turn the Tune knob until



Can't get BBC on your internet radio? A firmware update may fix the problem

Configure is displayed. Press the Select button and turn the Tune knob until the display shows Upgrade Firmware and press Select again. If an update is available, the radio will ask if you want to download and install it.

The BBC uses SHOUTcast to keep MP3 streams available, but they are only 128kbps, which isn't the best quality, and even these will eventually be stopped. You'll find a list of the available feeds at bit.ly/bbcradio367 and bit.ly/ukrad367.



This fortnight Roland has been trying out alternatives to Office365. He's decided LibreOffice may be the best solution

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others,

visit forum.webuser.co.uk

TOP TIP

ANDROID

Lollipop problems licked

About a month ago, I had an update for my Google Nexus 7 tablet, which let me download and install the latest version of Android - 5.0 Lollipop, I soon wished I hadn't because it made the tablet so slow and unresponsive that it was no longer any fun to use. Apps took ages to load and ran very slowly. I also have a friend who recently updated their phone to Lollipop, which then developed various bugs and problems, including apps not working properly.

The solution for both of us was to reset our devices and erase everything. This returns all the settings to their factory defaults but keeps the current version of Android. It is a bit like getting a new tablet or phone, which means you have to set everything up again, but it's worth it because my Nexus 7 and my friend's phone are working normally again.

Go to Settings and find 'Backup and restore'. As long as you have 'Back up

Sackup and reset Backup and restore Back up my data Back up application data, Wi-Fi passwords, and other settings to Google servers. Backup account Automatic restore When reinstalling an application, backed up settings and data will be restored. Personal data Factory data reset set all settings and delete all data on device

'Factory data reset' can solve problems with your Android device

my data' and 'Automatic restore' enabled, you can use 'Factory data reset'. The device restarts and should be like new. Log into your Google account and you can restore most of your stuff, including apps, settings, contacts, and so on. It's a drastic step but Lollipop now runs much faster and more smoothly on my Nexus 7.

David Sparks, via email

HARDWARE

Speed up your hard drive

I have found some Registry hacks on the internet that claim to speed up your hard drive. I have been using these for about a week with no problems and it may be my imagination, but the drive does seem faster. To add them to your PC, press Windows+R and type regedit to open the Registry Editor. Go to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Policies\Explorer

The right-hand pane will probably be empty. Right-click the empty space and select New, 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Do it four times and create four values with the following names:

NoLowDiskSpaceChecks NoResolveSearch NoResolveTrack

NoInternetOpenWith

After creating each one, double-click it and type 1 (the number one) for the value. Quit the Registry Editor and restart Windows. Hopefully, your PC will be a tiny bit quicker.

The Registry hacks stop Windows making unnecessary checks, such as for low drive space which, on my PC, is pointless because I have a 1TB hard drive that I'm never going to fill. To undo these changes, return to the Registry Editor, right-click each one and select Delete.

Robert McCabe, via email

GENERAL PC

Move your screenshots

The Prt Scr key on your keyboard can be used to take a screenshot. Press it and an image of your screen is saved to the clipboard. You can then open or switch



to a paint program, photo editor or something similar and press Ctrl+V to paste it from the clipboard.

Windows 8 has an extra function. If you hold down the Windows key while pressing Prt Scr, the screenshot is saved to a special folder:

C:\Users\YourName\Pictures\

If you want to save screenshots to a different folder, open your Pictures folder in an Explorer window, right-click the Screenshots folder and select Properties on the menu. Go to the Location tab to show the current location, then click the Move button and choose another location, such as a different folder or partition on the hard drive.

G Quinn, via email

GENERAL PC

Create an up-to-date installation disc

When I recently installed Windows XP on a virtual machine, I was chuffed that I'd had the foresight to integrate Service Pack 3 into the original CD using NLite (www.nliteos.com). This saved me from the time-consuming process of downloading and installing SP3 again, although it still took about four hours to install all the hotfixes and updates that follow SP3.

Creating a system image is a good way of avoiding this lengthy process if you only use one PC. If you need to use an installation disc with multiple PCs, you



NTLite lets you integrate updates into the installation file for Windows 7 onwards

should try using NLite to add all Windows updates to it.

Microsoft issues updates via the Update Centre, but it's also possible to download them so that they can be installed several times. The updates for XP have been collated into a single update pack, which is available from WinCert.net (bit.ly/rollup367). So, by downloading SP1.1, SP3 and the update pack, you can use NLite to convert an original Windows XP installation disc into a slick SP3 disc that contains all available updates, cutting the installation time dramatically. XP may be a thing of the past, but I won't be ditching it any time soon, so I find the program incredibly handy. Because it's such a great idea, NLite's developer has made a version of the tool that works with all versions of Windows from 7 onwards. It's available from www.ntlite.com, so try using it to update your tired old installation disc.

If you'd rather not use NLite, you can try Win Toolkit (bit.ly/wintoolkit367), which also lets you customise an installation disc. WHDownloader (bit.ly/ hotfix367) is another handy tool for collecting together hotfixes.

Izzit, Web User Forums

BOOKS

Free ebooks and audiobooks

Did you know that you can get free access to more than 700,000 ebooks and audiobooks with a 30-day trial of Amazon's Kindle Unlimited service? Unfortunately, you can only keep the books for as long as you subscribe, so after the free trial you have to carry on paying £7.99 a month. However, it's great if you're going on holiday for a week or two and want some new reading material while you're there.

There are plenty of computing titles and I noticed several covering Windows 7 and 8. Some newer titles aren't included, but there's still a huge selection. If you don't have a Kindle device, you can still get access to the Kindle Unlimited library by downloading the appropriate Kindle app for iOS, Android or PC.

FratPark, Web User Forums



Kindle Unlimited lets you download up to 10 books at a time



Self-adhesive QWERTY keyboard stickers are available from Amazon

SOFTWARE

Keep your hard drive healthy

I don't know much about hard drives, but I found a useful article on BT's website at bit.ly/harddrive367, which provides tips on how to avoid hard-drive failure. Fortunately, I already knew about the Windows error-checking tool and I have also previously used HD Tune (www .hdtune.com) to check on my hard drive's

Regardless of how often you use these tools, it's still important to perform regular back-ups, because up to 25 per cent of hard drives have been known to fail within four to five years.

Madeline, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

10 free tools to repair Windows 7

When I recently had a problem on my PC that a Microsoft 'Fix it' wouldn't solve. I discovered a handy list of free tools that can be used to repair Windows 7 (bit.ly/ repair367). All the listed programs are free and can help to troubleshoot and fix common Windows errors. Although it's aimed at Windows 7 users, some of the applications also work on Windows 8.

Reena, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 8

Windows 7's Start menu in 8.1

If you're running Windows 8.1 and you'd prefer to have a Start menu that resembles Windows 7's, try installing IObit Start Menu 8 (bit.ly/startmenu367). Until the final version of Windows 10 is available, it's a great way of avoiding Windows 8's annoying Start screen. It's also customisable, free and easy to use. I downloaded it a fortnight ago and I am very happy with it.

rogerman40, Web User Forums

HARDWARE

Convert your Chrome keyboard

I recently bought a Chromebook and I really like it, except for the keyboard which uses lower-case letters. This seems common to all Chromebooks, and I find the keys are very difficult to read.

Fortunately, I managed to find a set of self-adhesive stickers on Amazon for a British-layout QWERTY keyboard (bit.ly/ keyboard367). They cost £3.95 and it only took me about 20 minutes to place them over my keys and switch their lower-case letters with capitals.

Webby0418, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Avoid free software's unwanted extras

I've recently been favouring portable applications over programs that you install on your PC, because I am fed up with dodgy installers containing unwanted extras. Portable programs are applications that can be run from anywhere - your PC, a USB drive or a hard drive - and you don't have to install them, so they don't make any changes to your PC or Registry.

Having read up on portable software in old issues of Web User. I decided to have a look at The Portable Freeware Collection (www.portablefreeware.com) to see what was available. There are too many programs to mention, but some that caught my eye include: Wise Program Uninstaller (bit.ly/wise367), which I had already used and can recommend; Stickies (bit.ly/stickies367); Google Chrome Portable (bit.ly/ chrome367); Skype Portable (bit.ly/ skype367); LibreOffice Portable (bit.ly/ libre367) and many more.

Next time you're looking for new software, it's worth checking to see if there's a portable version available. They're less intrusive than installed programs and often smaller, too.

Fosseywayfella, Web User Forums



The Portable Freeware Collection contains hundreds of free portable programs



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk - it's friendly and free!

MOBILE

Why can't I transfer iPhone photos via Bluetooth?

My son-in-law takes photos with his iPhone and although it has Bluetooth, we can't seem to transfer any photos to other devices. Does anyone know an easy way to get these photos on to another device, please?

kingfisher171, Web User Forums

Unfortunately, you can't transfer photos from an iPhone via Bluetooth; try connecting the phone to your PC with a USB cable and moving them that way. There's advice on how to do this on the Apple Support Communities website at bit.ly/transfer367. One of the tips is to make sure your iPhone is unlocked before navigating to the folder containing the photos. If you haven't already, you'll also need to tell your iPhone to trust your computer (see Apple's support site at bit.ly/iphone367 for more information).

Otherwise, you could try using Dropbox (www.dropbox.com) or Google Drive (drive.google.com). They're both free and accessible on all devices. Once you've uploaded your pictures, they're available to view or share on any device.

Another option would be to upload the images to Facebook or one of the online photo sites, such as Photobucket or Flickr. You can tweak your privacy settings on all these sites so that only you can see the images. There's also a handy app called Simple Transfer (bit.ly/



When you first connect your iPhone to a PC, a pop-up asks if you trust the computer

MOBILE

Which is the best mobile network?

I've decided to leave O2 because the mobile data part of my contract doesn't represent very good value for money. My friend has been with Three for a couple of years and is very happy with the service, but can anyone recommend any other companies before I go ahead and make the switch?

NE5, Web User Forums

Recommendations for mobilephone companies offered on the Web User forum might not be of much help to you, unless they are from people who live in your local area, because coverage varies across the country. Before you make a decision, try to contact local family, neighbours, friends and colleagues who can give you a more accurate impression of the providers' service where you live. If this isn't possible, most of the mobile networks offer coverage maps showing how strong the signal is for a particular postcode.



Three's coverage tool lets you see the signal strength in your local area

As long as there is good coverage in your area, I can confirm that Three's PAYG service is very good, and it offers 3p per minute calls, 2p texts and 1p per MB data (1GB for £10). Any usage is deducted from your credit, which then rolls over from month to month. Don't forget to consider the virtual mobile networks such as Tesco Mobile (which uses O2's network), Giffgaff (also O2), Mobile by Sainsbury's (Vodafone), Asda Mobile (EE) and Virgin Media Mobile (EE). These use the infrastructure of the main network but are almost always cheaper.

> Moonshine, BobClayton and ianrj, **Web User Forums**

simple367), which claims to be able to transfer your photos wirelessly without having to install iTunes or any other software on your PC.

Difarn and Izzit, Web User Forums

HARDWARE

How can I recover files from my NAS?

The other day I noted that loads of my files had gone missing from my Seagate Goflex Home NAS drive. I want to try to recover them, but if I open the case to get at the drive, my warranty will be voided. I have also been told that you can't access the internal drive by simply connecting it to a PC with a USB cable. Can anyone suggest how I might recover my files?

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

Your best bet is to look at the manufacturer's website. It depends on the operating system used by the NAS, but without access to the hardware, I don't think you've got much chance. In my case, I've got a Linux-formatted NAS, so the only way to access it is to remove the drive and mount it inside a Linux PC.

Izzit, Web User Forums

SECURITY

How can I delete Digihelp from Firefox?

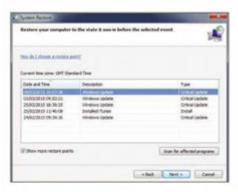
Does anyone know how I can get rid of Digihelp from my Firefox browser? It constantly puts adverts over the screen. It doesn't affect Internet Explorer and my McAfee security software has not picked it up.

malky46, Web User Forums

The program probably ended up on your PC when you installed something else and left a box ticked that authorised its installation. It is vital that you check for such boxes when installing free software in the future and you can use the program Unchecky (unchecky .com) to give you a hand.

I'd use Revo Uninstaller (www .revouninstaller.com) and/or Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www .malwarebytes.org) to get rid of the program, avoiding Windows' usual uninstallation process, because this might make it more difficult for other removal tools to spot the PUP (Potentially Unwanted Program). System Restore should get rid of the malware, too, and I'd advise trying this regardless of what other software you use, provided you have a restore point from before you accidentally installed it.

Difarn and Jak, Web User Forums



System Restore can be used to get rid of unwanted software on your PC

HARDWARE

How can I make my laptop run faster?

My wife's Advent 9115 laptop is running very slowly, probably due to old age. The system information tells me it has 2GB of memory, but when I use Crucial's Advisor tool (bit.ly/ crucialadvisor367), it suggests a 2GB memory module as an upgrade. I can't see how this would make any difference, unless it's faster memory. Any advice or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Jeff, Web User Forums

The Crucial website is suggesting a choice of modules you can install, but your computer is already maxed out with 2GB of memory. To check if the Crucial upgrades are better, you can download the free version of Speccy (www.piriform.com/speccy) and check your memory's CL value by clicking the RAM link from the Summary page. In this case, if your module's CL has a value greater than 5, then the Crucial modules represent an upgrade.



Crucial's Advisor tool lists all memory modules compatible with a particular PC

I don't know which OS you have installed on the laptop, but you could try opening Control Panel and looking for 'Find and fix problems' under 'System and Security'. From here, select 'Run maintenance tasks' or 'Check for performance issues', if you can see them. If the laptop is running Windows 7, you should also press Windows+R, type %temp% and press Enter. If this folder contains a lot of files and folders, it could be slowing down the PC.

The free version of CCleaner (www .piriform.com/ccleaner) lets you clear your temporary file cache and check your start-up items for anything unnecessary that's taking up memory. There's a helpful tutorial on the developer's site at bit.ly/ ccleaner367. Uninstalling rarely used programs and defragging your hard drive always helps as well.

Although it's a bit of a pain if you don't have an up-to-date system image, Windows inevitably benefits from the occasional reinstall, so you could try that if the laptop is still running slowly. It will clear out the rubbish that has accumulated over the years, but be

prepared for a long session of installing hundreds of patches. As a last alternative, you could install Linux and avoid all the tedious updating.

> Cantrel and Calimanco, Web User Forums

Why is Gmail putting emails in the Spam folder?

I use Gmail to receive messages from three email accounts. My problem is that promotional emails from Amazon keep going into spam. I click 'Not spam' for all of them, every day, and get a message about improving the spam filter from time to time, but this never changes anything and the emails still go into Spam. Can anyone help please?

Abbafan1972, Web User Forums

Adding the email address to your contacts will normally do the trick, as explained on the Google support page for this problem at bit.ly/spam367. If this still doesn't work, you can try setting up a filter to make sure the emails from that address never end up in your Spam folder. For more information on creating filters, visit bit.ly/filters367.

If you want an easy way to filter all promotional emails, regardless of the sender, sign up to newsletters and alerts using an alias of your Gmail address. To create an alias, simply type your email address as normal, adding a full-stop anywhere before the '@' symbol. You can then filter all emails sent to this new address by assigning them to a separate

Izzit and count zero, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

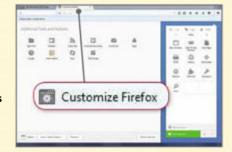
Can I move the search bar in Firefox?

When I search the web using Firefox, my instinct is to type into the box on the left, which is the address bar. Is it possible to swap the search box and address bar, so I stop making this mistake?

kingfisher171, Web User Forums

Yes, it's quite easy to move the search bar to the other side. Click the browser's menu button, select Customize and then simply drag the search bar to the area where you want it before clicking Exit Customize.

Since the address bar doubles up as a search bar, you might decide that you don't need the search bar at all. To get rid of it, drag and drop it to the 'Additional Tools and Features' window,



Firefox's Customize options let you change the browser's layout

where you can find it later should you decide you want it back. There are some other handy shortcuts you can add from this page too, such as Print, Save Page and Find.

Moonshine, Web User Forums



Star Email

We should mourn the death of Internet Explorer

ow that we know Microsoft is launching a new browser with Windows 10, I was pleased that your quiz in Issue 365 (bit.ly/ webuser365) paid tribute to the soon-to-be-late Internet Explorer.

Lots of people (rightly) criticise IE and compare it unfavourably to Firefox and Chrome, but it's worth remembering that those two browsers wouldn't exist if it wasn't for IE. No. I don't mean that they copied its ideas (which is what they've done to each other for the last few years), but if IE had been as speedy, secure and ground-breaking as Microsoft evidently thought it was, then we wouldn't have needed any other browser. And if Microsoft hadn't been so arrogant as to force IE onto all Windows users, then Mozilla and Google wouldn't have made their browsers open-source and thus earned respect and popularity

among web developers and users.

Without Internet Explorer, the choice and quality of rival browsers would be very poor, so we should at least thank it for being so awful. Some people even refer to IE as 'Chrome downloader', which probably says it all!

Making the move from IE is like graduating from basic computing 101. If Microsoft's new browser - Spartan or whatever it'll be called - turns out to be an amazing game-changer, we'll lose the tradition of that transition. Not that I think that's a valid reason for prolonging IE's life indefinitely. I dread to think how many newbies blindly use the browser without considering the security risks.

Still, when Internet Explorer is finally put out of its misery (except in China, where it'll probably live forever), I think a few of us will feel a tinge of nostalgic sadness.

Toby Mann. via email



Ad blockers are a necessary inconvenience

*.....

I have to say I disagree with Barry Collins' Page 404 column in Issue 365, 'The hypocrisy of blocking online ads'. The reason people use ad



blockers is, as Barry points out, due to obtrusive ads. Maybe he should have used his article to complain about the ads themselves, rather than criticising the company behind the ad-blocking program for taking payment from advertisers to allow their ads through. At least Adblock Plus sticks to its criteria and ensures that the ads are unobtrusive. People choose one website over another for many reasons, but I am sure one of them is not to be bombarded by

The alternative is that the punter pays to be ad-free, which is closer to the protection racket Barry claims ad blocking to be. Perhaps the ad-blocking company is hiring extra staff because the problem is

getting bigger rather than smaller, and rather than taking heed of why people use ad blockers, advertisers just keep trying to get round them.

In my own personal experience, ad blockers are a much needed inconvenience. I regularly log onto a football forum for my favourite team, and the website was becoming virtually unusable on my iPad due to the lack of ad-blocking software.

David Rodger, via email

Save paper by printing on both sides

I read with interest the email from Brian Bicknell in Issue 365 about emails using too much paper when you print them. As a great believer in cutting back on the

amount of paper we use. I wondered why he has never thought of printing on both sides of a sheet,

or only printing the first page of an

It is too easy just to click the Print button in any program, which usually defaults to your printer's standard settings. I always print by going to File, Print to bring up the Print dialogue. Previewing the document first will show you how many pages will be used and what is on each page. You can then select the page to print and leave out any you don't need. If you want all the pages, print on both sides. Automatic duplex printers are not expensive these days.

My colour laser printer packed up at the end of last year and my inkjet is too expensive to use for everything, so I invested £96 in a Ricoh SG3110DN Geljet (pictured). It's very fast, very cheap to run and has automatic duplex printing.

Stephen Baker, Macclesfield

With so many repeats, who needs catch-up?

Your support for Freeview launching a catch-up service (Need to Know, Issue 365) is one of the most laughable articles I have ever read. I assume you do not have Freeview or your article would

advertising.



You can let us know your views and opinions via:

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surely have taken a different view.



Freeview mostly consists of programmes that are on a repeat loop and can run for years. Even the main terrestrial channels repeat their output across their channels continually. For example, The Big Bang Theory and Come Dine With Me have have both been repeated across Channel 4's network for years. Meanwhile, on the BBC, Great British Railway Journeys is one programme that must give its presenter a nice little earner in repeat fees. In fact, something like 70 to 80 per cent of the BBC's output is repeats. Then Dave has Top Gear, which also has been running for years, ITV 3 has Morse; I could go on.

I can count on one hand the number of times I have used an on-demand service, because I just wait for the inevitable repeat. So, remind me again, why do I need a catch-up service?

Glenn Faulkner, Edinburgh

TalkTalk technical help is more talk than help

Recently, my Thunderbird email program stopped



sending emails. I knew from TalkTalk's website that engineers had been sorting out issues with email, so I phoned its technical helpline and explained more than five times what the problem was. I don't use TalkTalk's own webmail service because it's rubbish: you can't set up message rules to stop and delete spam, and it only shows a few emails on every page.

The bloke at TalkTalk asked me to give him my router name and model to log into my account on the TalkTalk site. He just seemed to be following a formulaic set of questions and didn't think outside the box. It doesn't help when customerservice staff overseas don't have a good grasp of English and aren't skilled at problem solving. He said he could not help me and I should contact Mozilla.

In the end, I changed the port number in Thunderbird from 349 back to 25 and guess what: it's now working again. Yet TalkTalk had me on the phone for 30 minutes and could not resolve such a simple problem.

Adrian Bonnington, via email



SHOULD MOTORISTS CAUGHT USING A MOBILE PHONE WHILE DRIVING BE BANNED FROM THE ROAD?

Yes, along with motorists caught smoking and eating.

Nigel Monroe

I reckon this should mean six points on your licence, not three. That would stop it, because your insurance would increase!

Roger Whitcomb @milairpix

Yes. The sooner we rid the roads of idiots, the better. The standard of driving in the UK is shocking.

Shamus Doherty

I think applying make-up while driving is worse.

Gee Maxx

OOGLE IS MAKING CHANGES TO GOOGLE+, BUT DO YOU STILL USE IT?

Most definitely. Google+ is my go-to social-networking platform and I use it daily. Facebook is for talking to your family, while Google+ is for discovery and conversation.

Ben @amugofjava

I use it now and again with my blog and YouTube, but it feels pointless because no one is on it. I think Google has given up on it.

Chris Cole

Only because I was forced to use it when Google merged it with Picasa.

Branden Grant

Any relationship I have with Google+ has been by mistake. It kind of forced itself on me.

Charmian O'Brien

C HOULD CATCH-UP TV ON THE IPLAYER BE RESTRICTED TO PEOPLE WHO **PAY THE LICENCE FEE?**

In theory, it should be. But in reality, it would be totally unenforceable.

David Pawley-Smith @david_p_s

They should scrap the TV licence. Just have a subscription fee, then you pay if you want to watch TV.

Dale Taylor @SocialMediaDale

Yes. The licence fee is meant to alllow the BBC to create content that probably wouldn't be provided by a commercial organisation. Much of this ideal has fallen by the wayside, but it should be brought back and the content restricted to those people who have paid the fee.

Claire Jackson-Prior

No. Nor should the TV licence exist. The BBC should fight it out like any other channel.

Chris Hughes

No, that's a stupid idea. People should only pay the licence fee if they watch live TV, not catch-up.

......

Andrew Clennell

HEN DID YOU LAST **SWITCH YOUR BROADBAND PROVIDER?**

I switched to TalkTalk five years ago, and I have no intention of moving. The service is good, although there's a lot of negative press about TalkTalk.

Brian Brown

I've never switched. The joys of living in the Kingston Comms area (Hull)!

Louise Barrett

We last switched a few years ago when we moved home, and went from BT to Sky. We had a very bad experience with BT - constantly dropping out and poor technical support. We've had the odd hiccup with Sky, but nothing like the issues we had with BT.

James McGinnis

A Page 404

Barry Collins is horrified that his Facebook friends can choose who he mixes with

Falling in with the wrong group

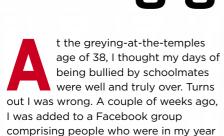
ff Get a grip, man. A

woman's just died and all

you're worried about is

whether people think you're

a skinflint **!**



Note my careful use of the word "added". I didn't ask to join, nor was I invited to participate - I was simply added. One of my old school chums decided that I should be in the group, and so I was part of the gang, whether I liked it or not.

Soon my Facebook timeline was filled with old school photos of people I hadn't seen for 25 years. Conversations sprang up about who fancied who in the fifth form, and arrangements were soon being made for a school reunion.

But behind all the nostalgic chit-chat, there was also something much more serious afoot. One of the girls in our year - now a fully grown woman, of course - had just died. Arrangements were being made to send messages of condolence to her funeral and someone started a collection for flowers from her

old schoolfriends. Because I was (involuntarily) part of this group and had read these messages on my timeline, I was publicly listed among the people

who had "seen" these messages on Facebook.

Suddenly, I felt under uncomfortable pressure to write a message of condolence to someone I barely remembered, who I hadn't seen for a quarter of a century, and who was to all intents and purposes a complete



stranger. Would old schoolfriends think me callous for not writing anything, knowing I had seen the message? Would people think me tight if I didn't chip in for the flowers?

If you're reading this and thinking: "Get a grip, man. A woman's just died

and all you're worried about is whether people think you're a skinflint," trust me, I've had the very same internal monologue. I'm not proud of my

reaction. But I'm spectacularly annoyed with Facebook for making me feel this awkward in the first place.

Nobody should be thrust into a group without their express permission. Yet, Facebook lets any of your "friends" add you to a group, which is then publicly listed on your profile, without your

permission. Don't touch Facebook for a few days and you could conceivably find that one of your loose Facebook acquaintances has added you to the group for the BNP, the Roman Catholic Church or, worse still, the Eamon Holmes Appreciation Society, with all your friends being informed of your new allegiance via their timelines. Today, I discovered that a former colleague who 'friended' me on Facebook is a member of a Ukip group. By this time tomorrow, I could be an unwitting member of Nigel's lunatic fringe.

Worse still, Facebook gives you no option to stop people adding you to groups. You can leave a group at any time, but by the time you've noticed, it may be too late to save your reputation.

My social groups, my political affiliation, my religion (or lack of) are my choices - nobody else's. Why on Earth does Facebook give other people the right to make those decisions for me?



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